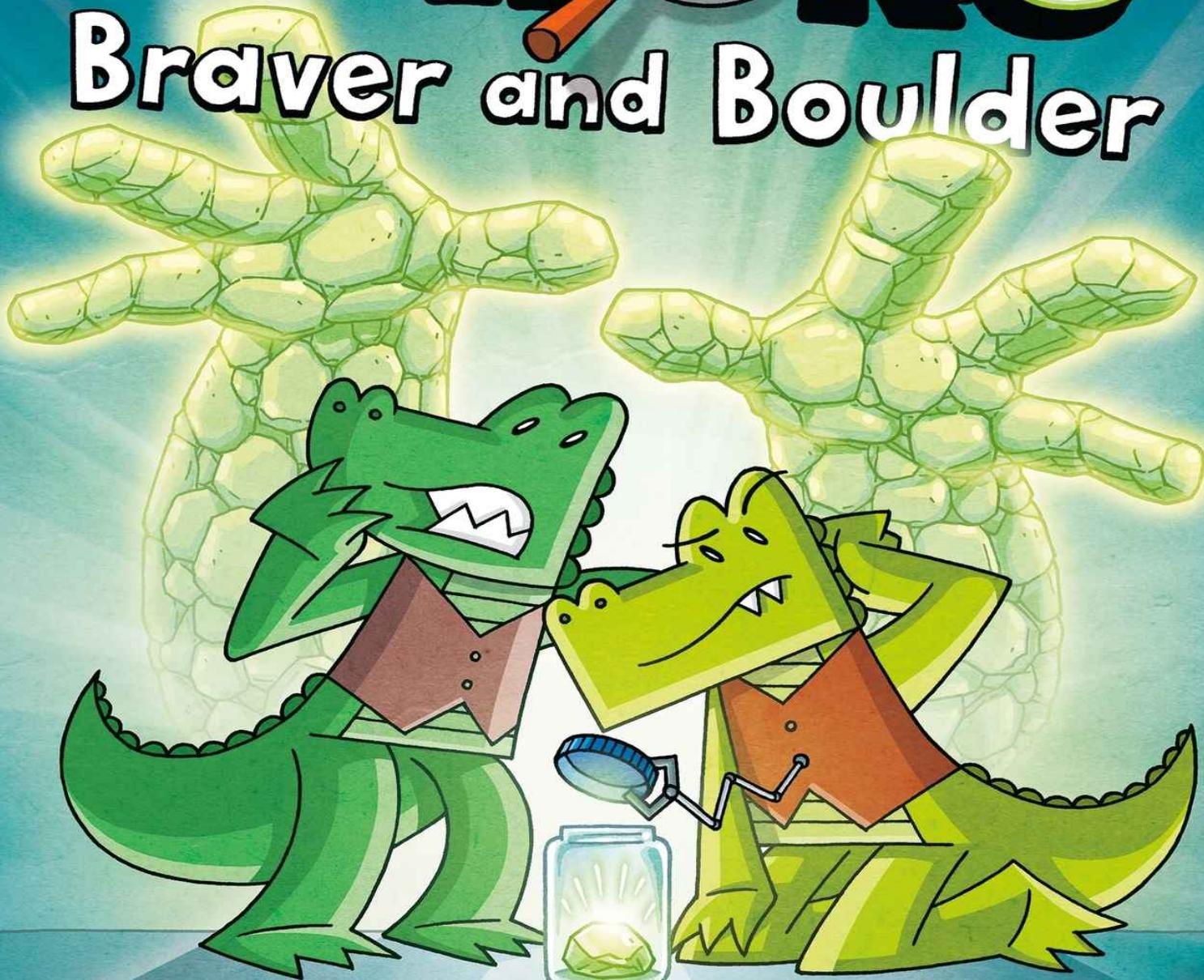


Investi GATORS

Braver and Boulder



New York Times-Bestselling Author

John Patrick Green



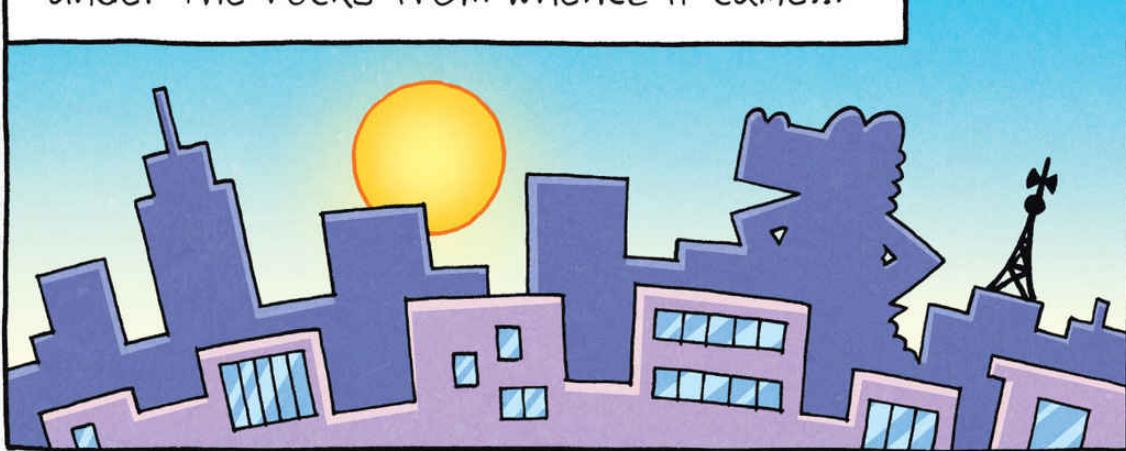
:01

First Second



Chapter 1

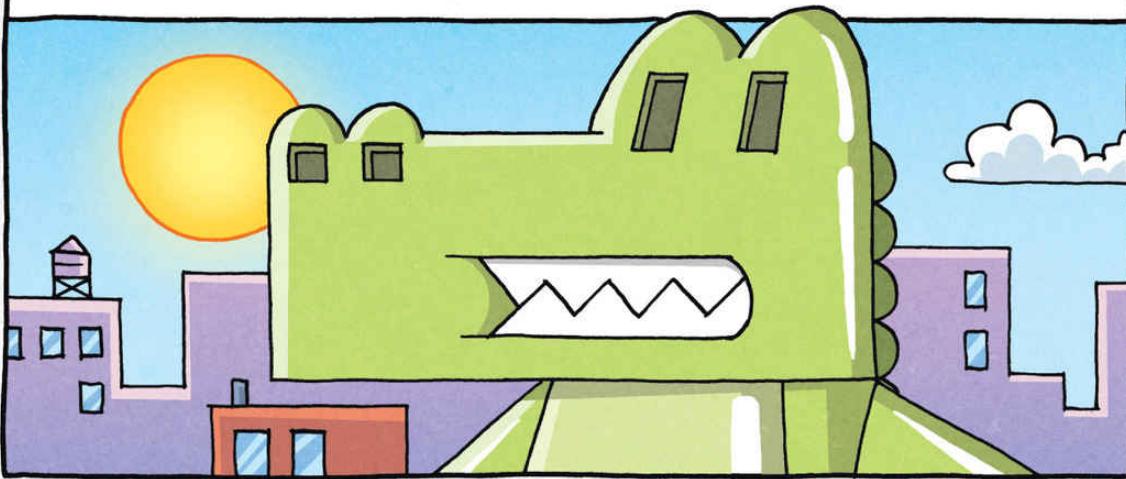
Another peaceful day in the city! Crime has crawled under the rocks from whence it came...



...cowering in fear of the **robot reptile** that saved our fine city from total destruction.



And now this great green guardian is home to the...



INVESTIGATOR!



ACTION NEWS NOW — CICI BORINGSTORIES — ACTION NEWS



Doesn't she realize there
are **TWO** Investigators,
Brash?

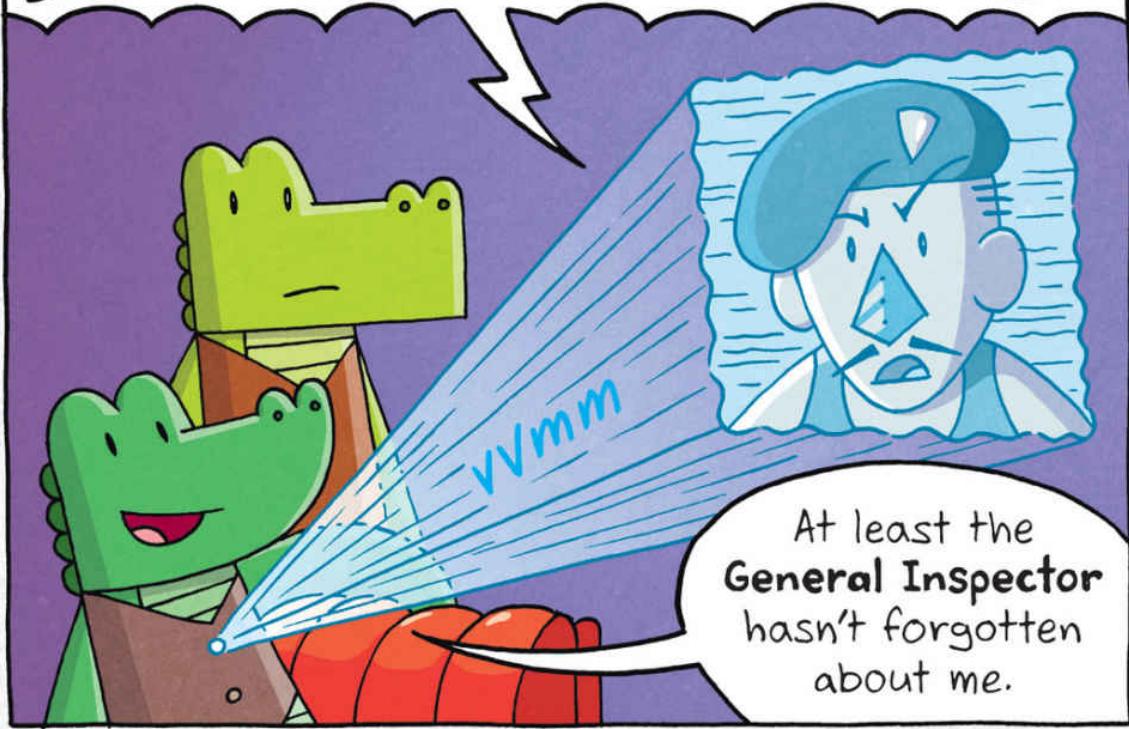
You should be *glad* she
doesn't, Mango.

My **HEAD** looks exactly like
our **HEADquarters**!

I can't go anywhere without being
recognized. It's put a real damper
on my **UNDERCOVER** work!

vrrp

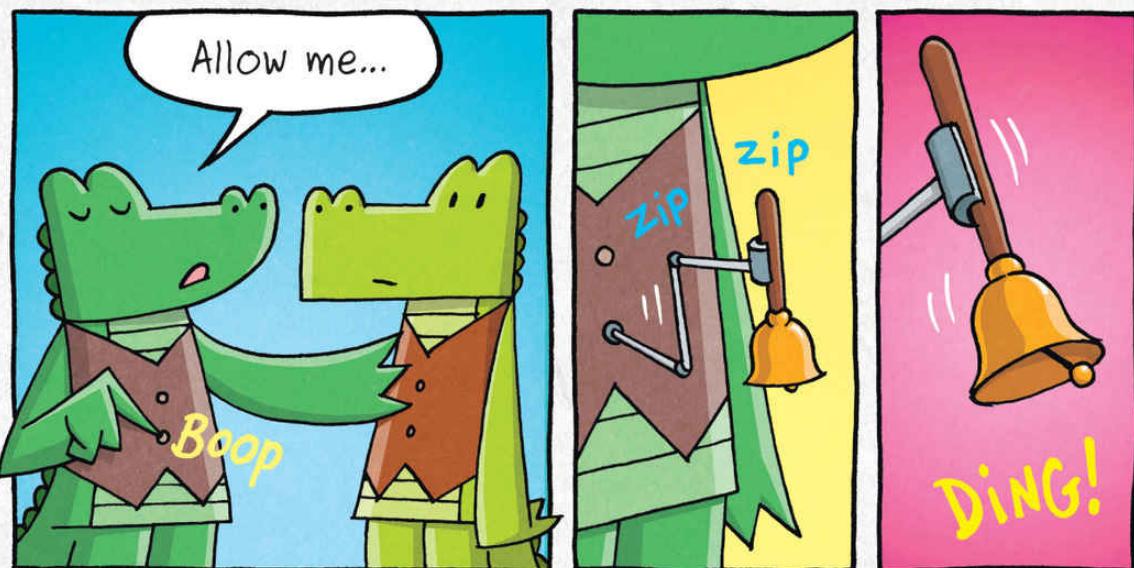
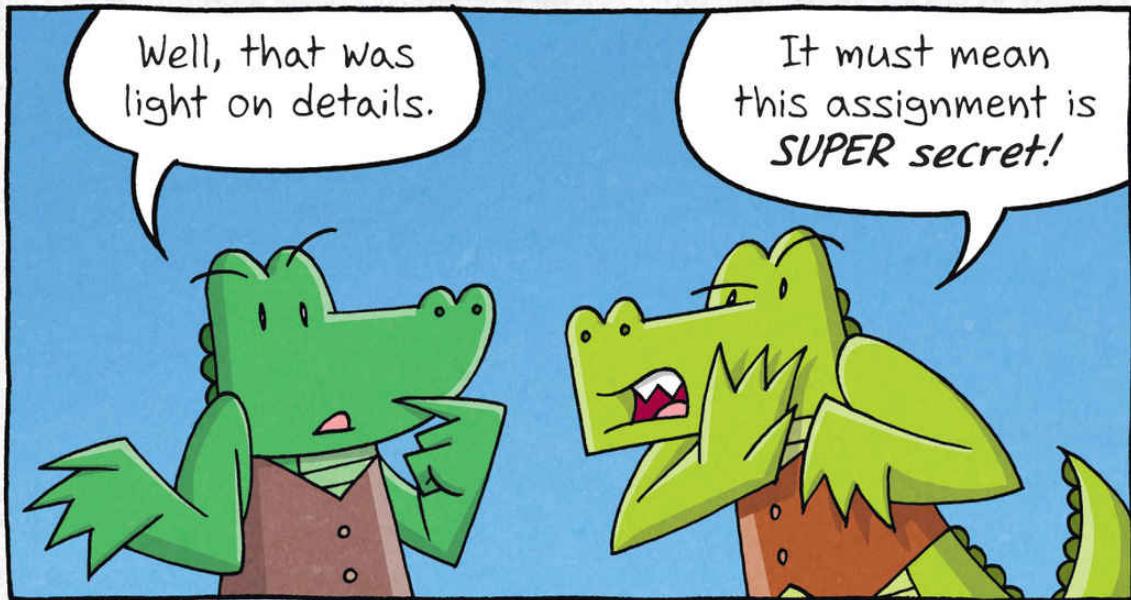
INVESTIGATORS!



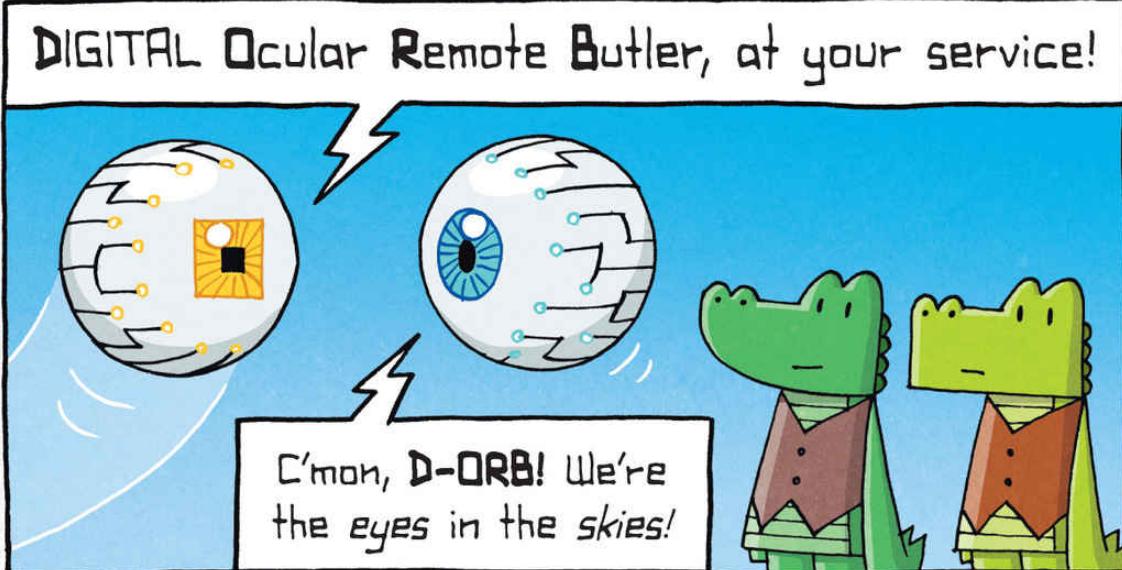
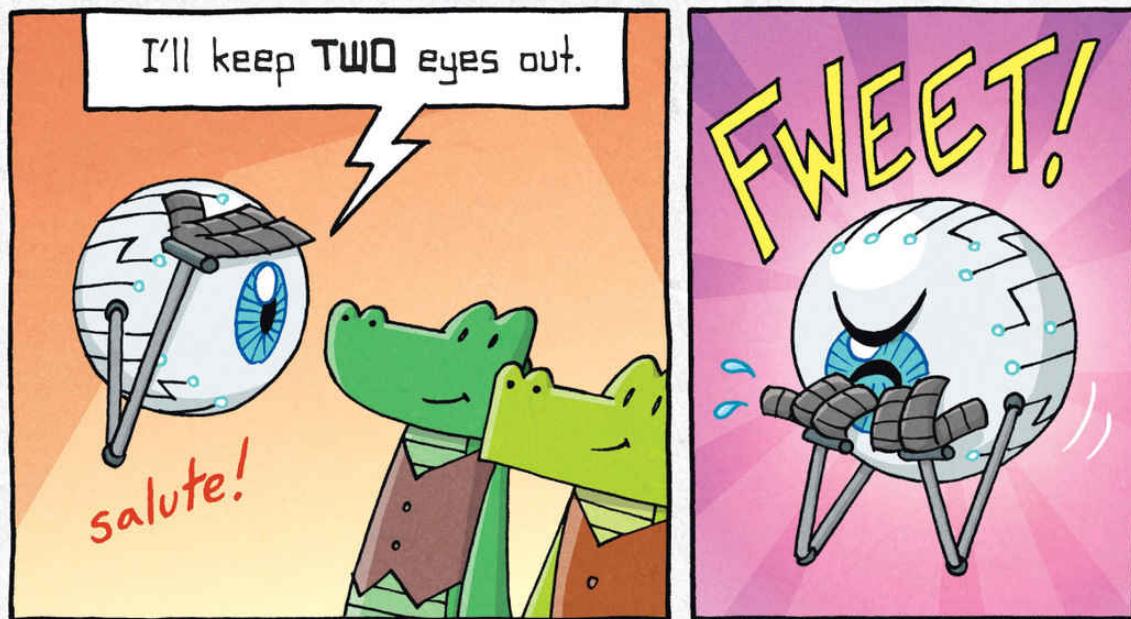
I have a special assignment for you two: Head to ARM'S to pick up and deliver a very important **S.U.I.T.*case!**

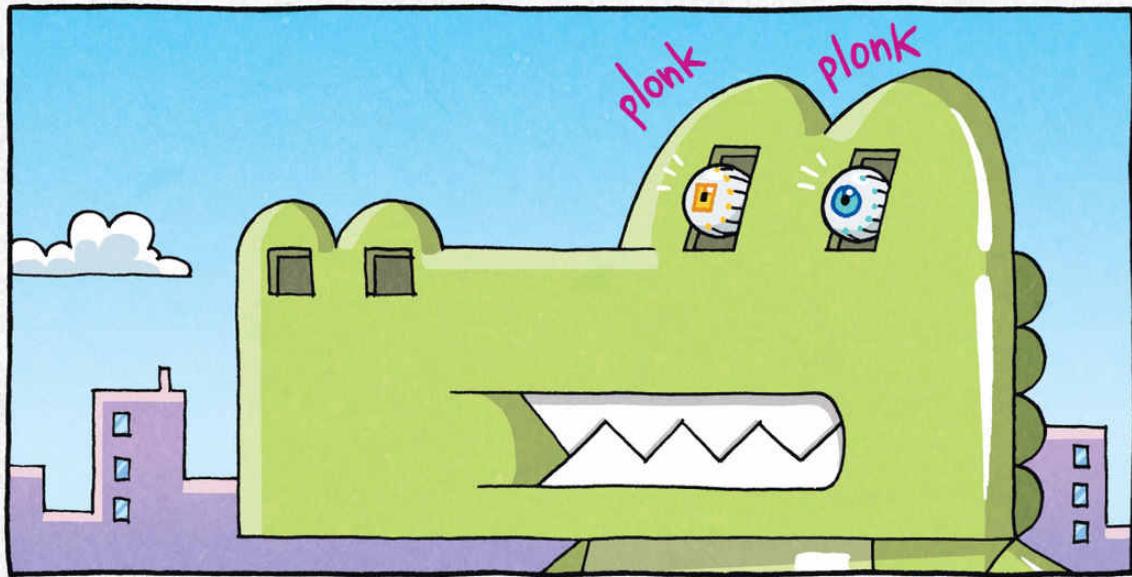
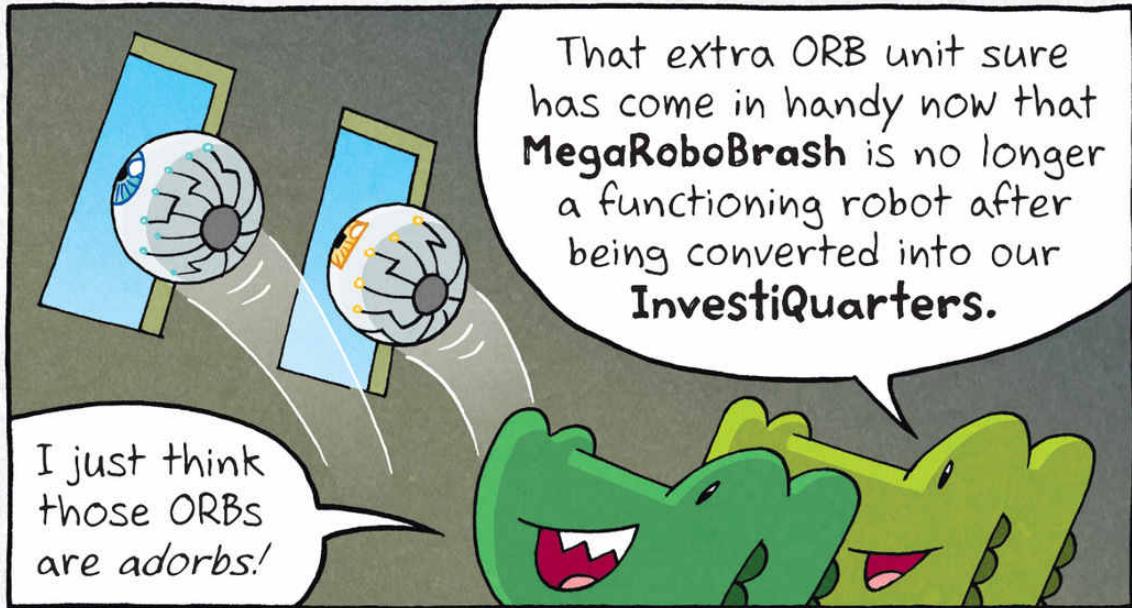


*Special Undercover Investigation Teams

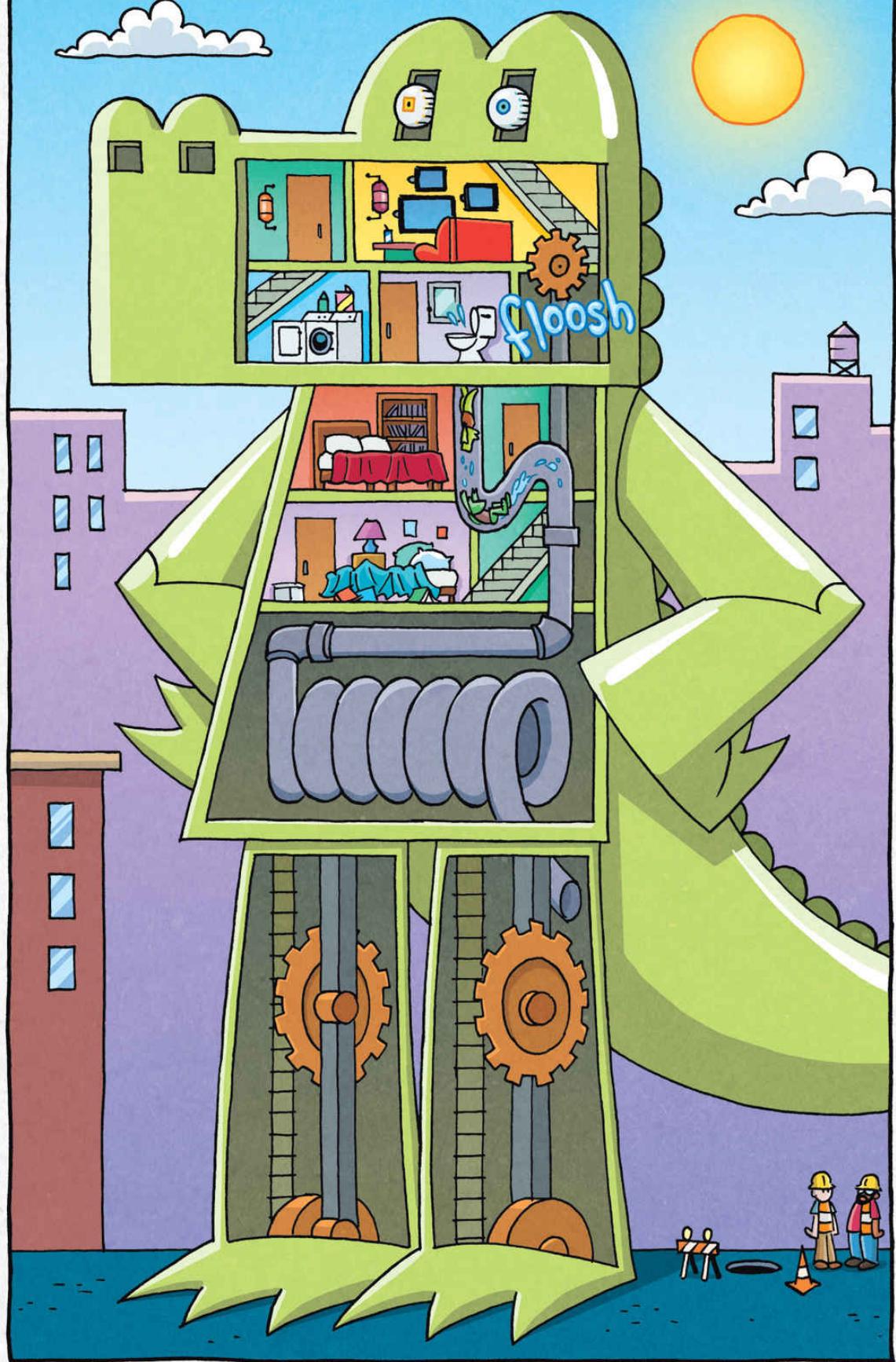


*Computerized Ocular Remote Butler





--INVESTIQUARTERS CROSS SECTION--



🎵 InvestiQuarters is a word with six vowels! 🎵

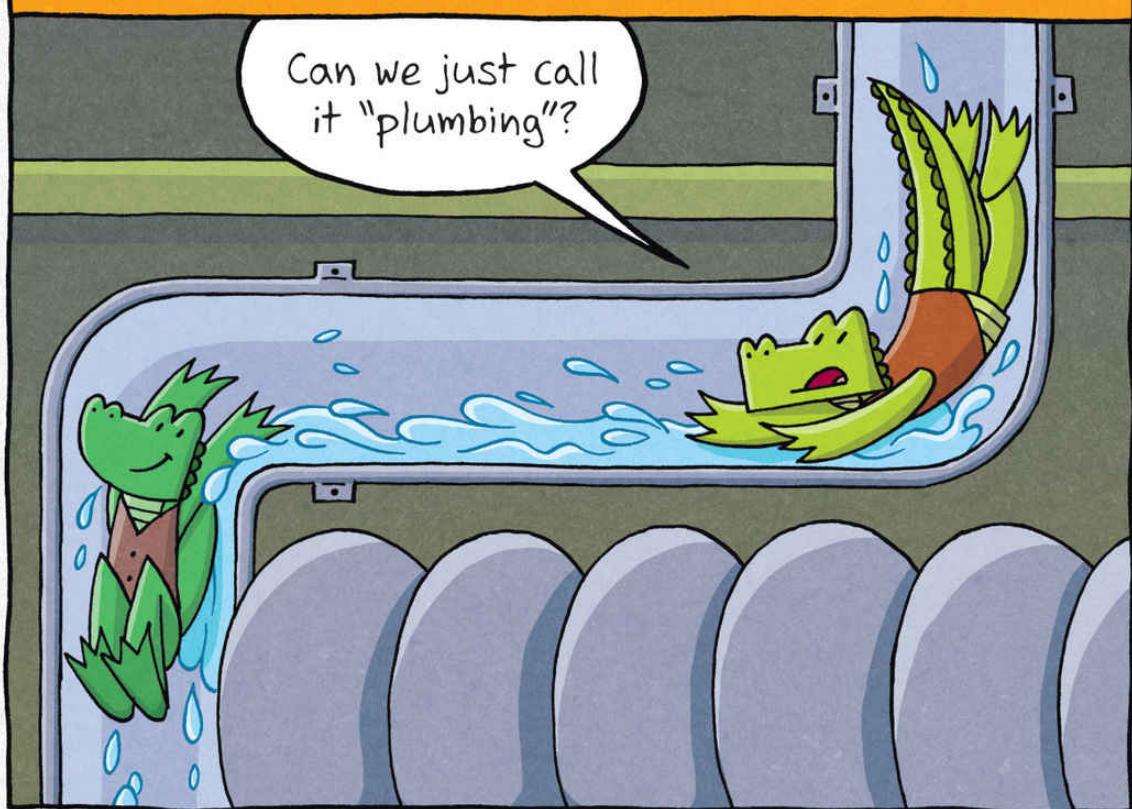
It's been forever
since we had a
musical montage.

YAY!



🎵 Mango and Brash are in its robotic bowels! 🎵

Can we just call
it "plumbing"?

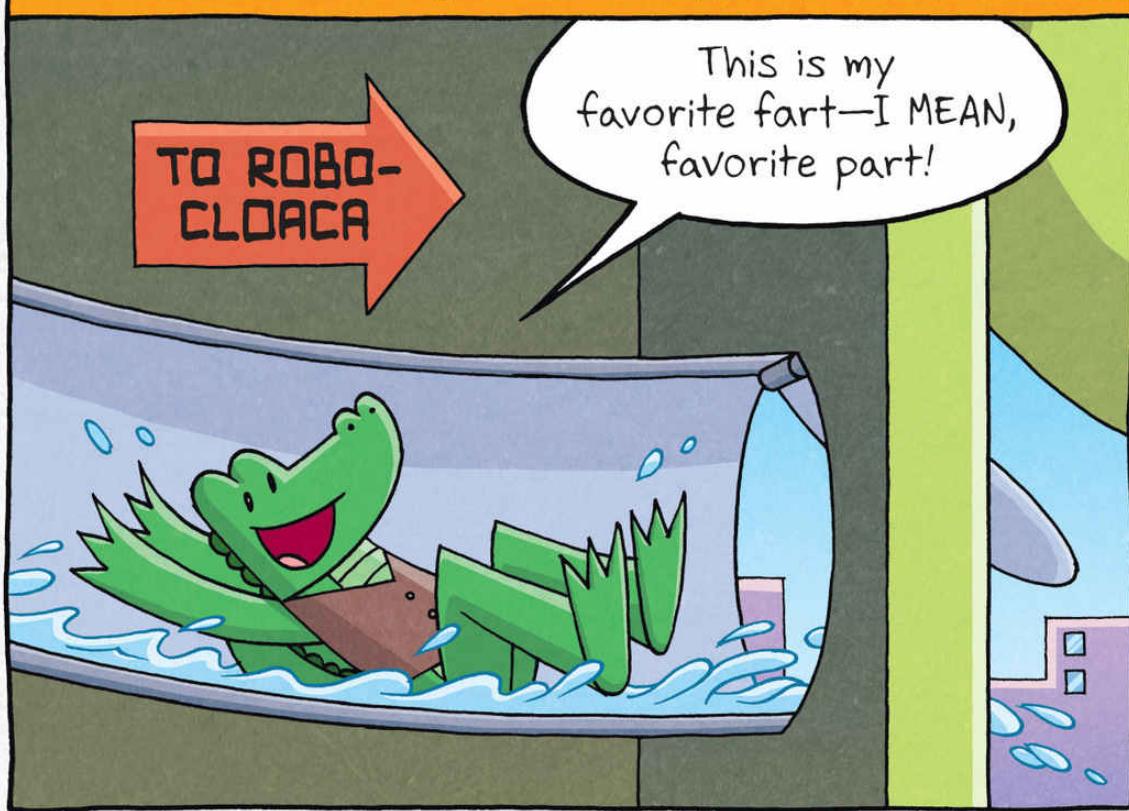


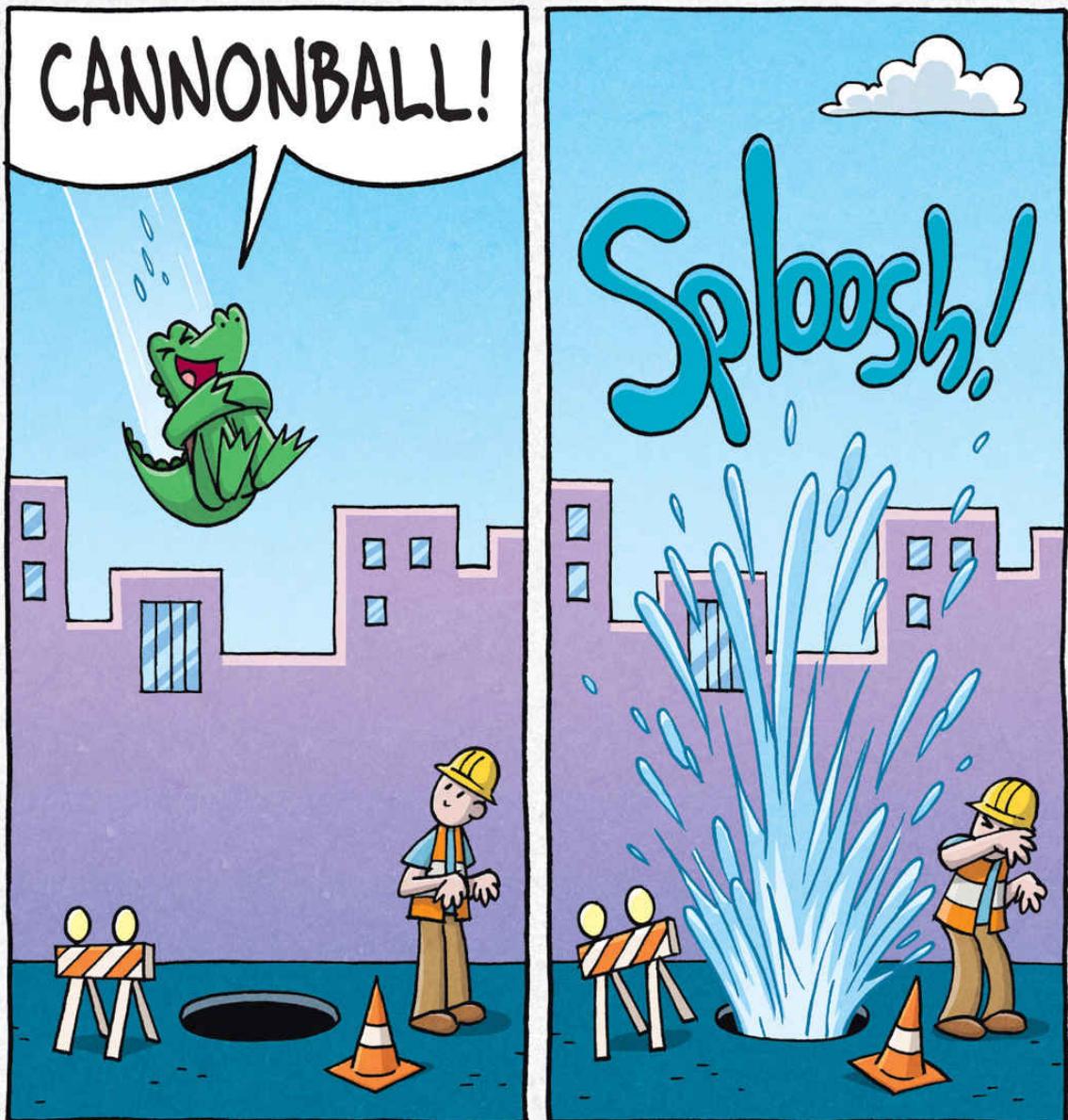
♪ ♪ Gettin' to the sewer is what it's about! ♪ ♪

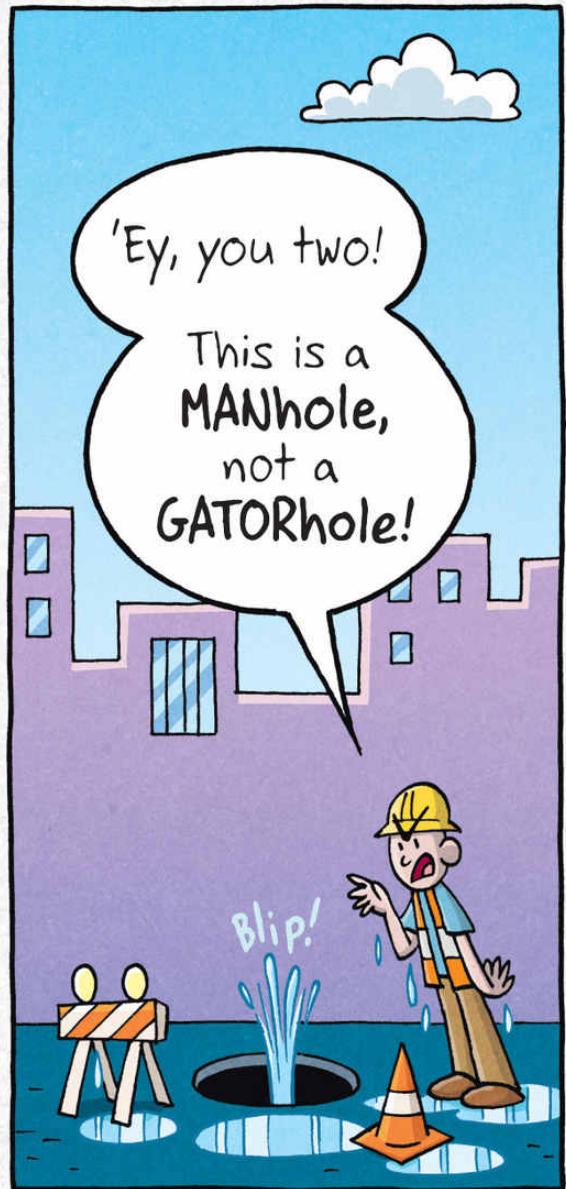


The journey is
just as important
as the destination.

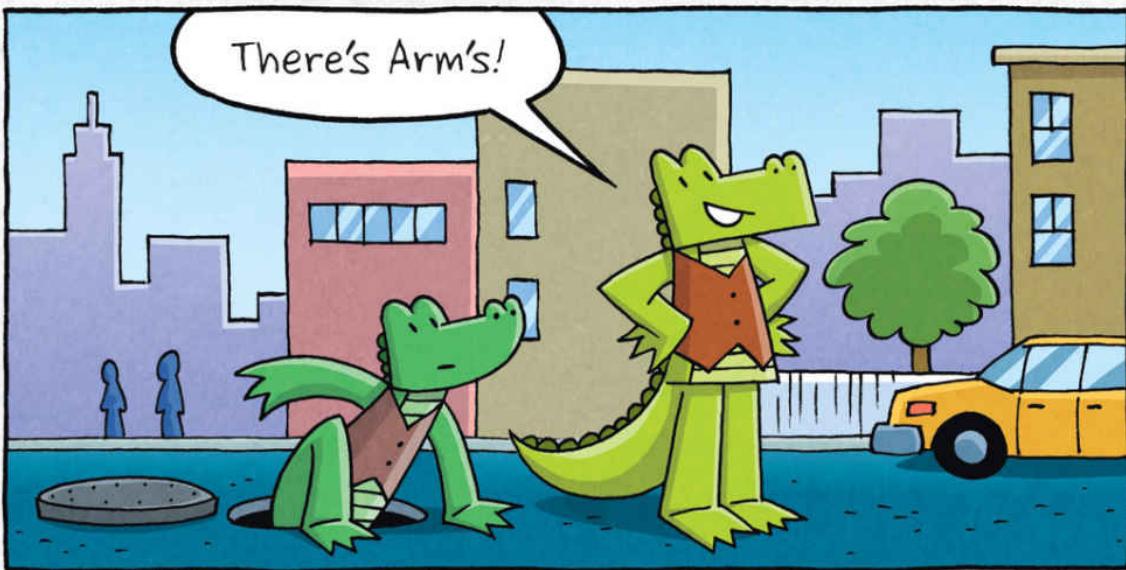
♪ Even if it seems gross, the way they come out! ♪



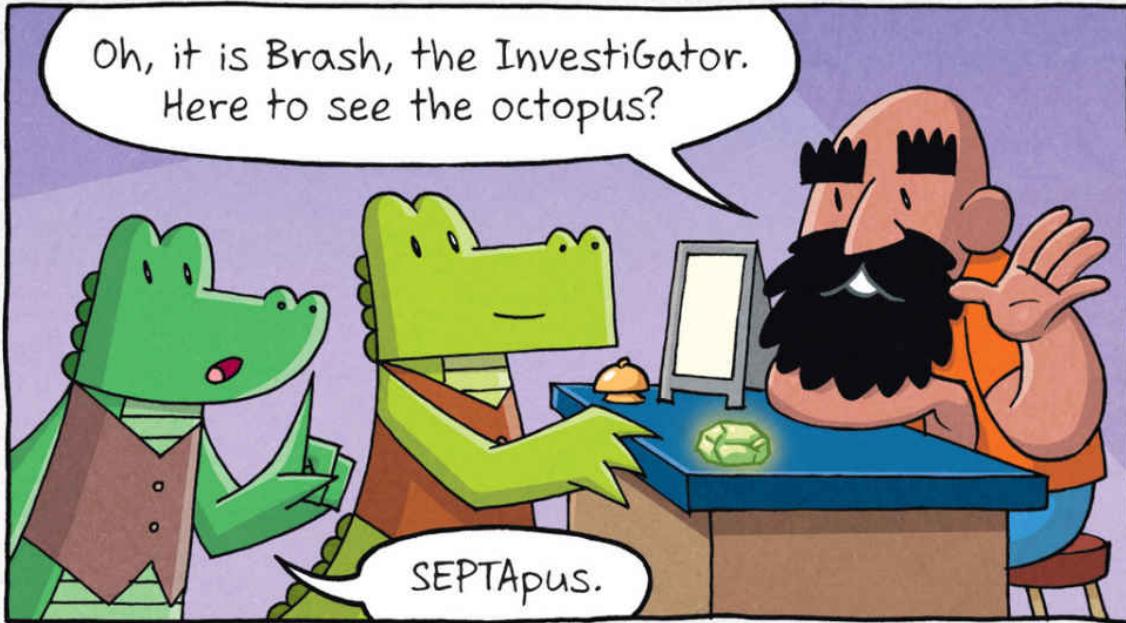
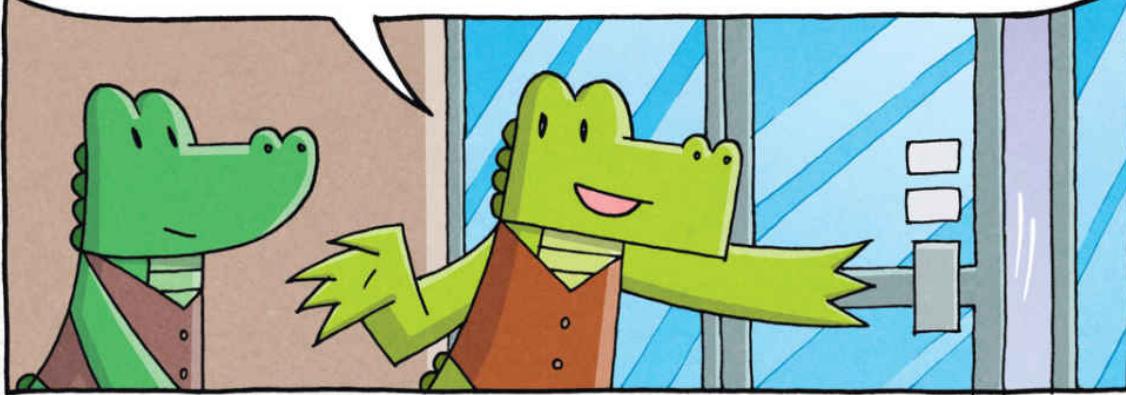


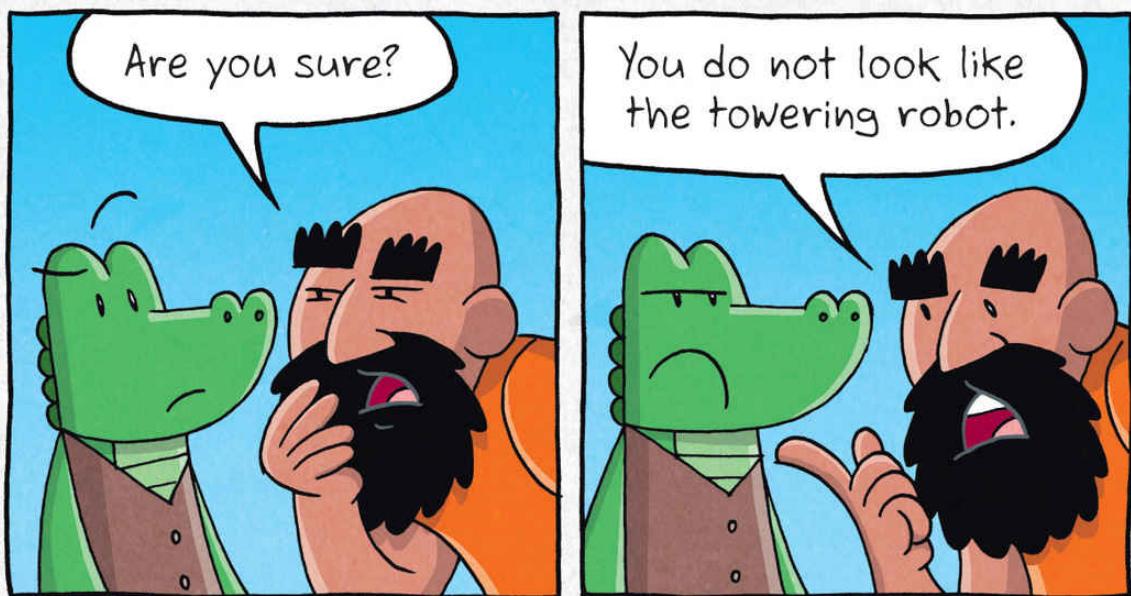


Chapter 2



Armando's is of course the Apparel Research and Manufacturing *SUBSTITUTE*, while the real A.R.M.S. is being rebuilt with the rest of S.U.I.T. headquarters.





Hello, Sven!

Ah, Mango and Brash! Welcome to Arm's. I know it's not as fancy as my **workshop** back at S.U.I.T. HQ, but at least I'm still working in fashion. Now, how can I help you?



The G.I. sent us to pick up a S.U.I.T. case.

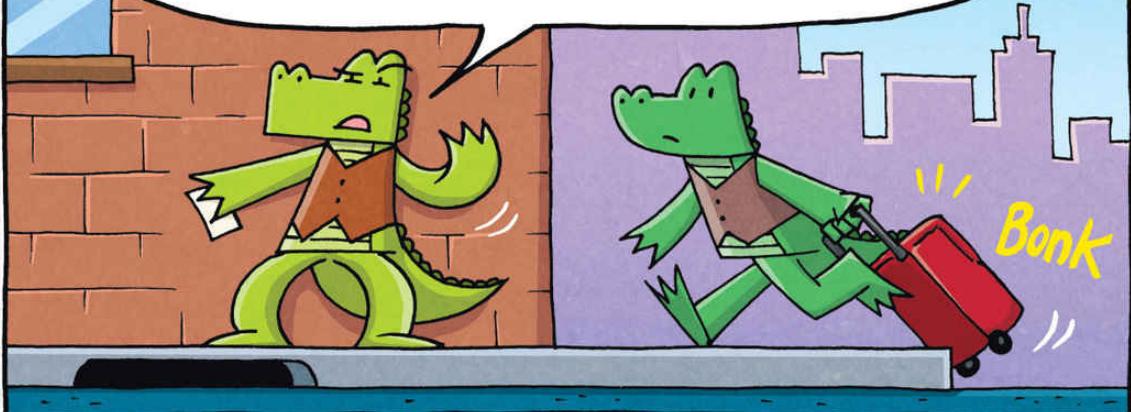
Oh, right. **SPECIAL** assignment.



Here you go, Mango!



We must be extra vigilant, Mango. There are probably **counteragents** who are after the contents of that S.U.I.T.case!



Careful! Whatever's in that thing might be **FRAGILE**!



How 'bout we peek inside?

DON'T OPEN IT!



It might be full of undeveloped spy photos that would be ruined if exposed to light! Or classified documents above our pay grade! Ingredients to a secret recipe! Answers to a math exam! Or maybe it's **BOOBY-TRAPPED**!

A booby trap... in a rolly cart?



You know how the spy business works. The more innocent something looks, the more DANGEROUS it can be! That's why the General Inspector tasked his **BEST AGENTS** to deliver it!



And deliver it...where?



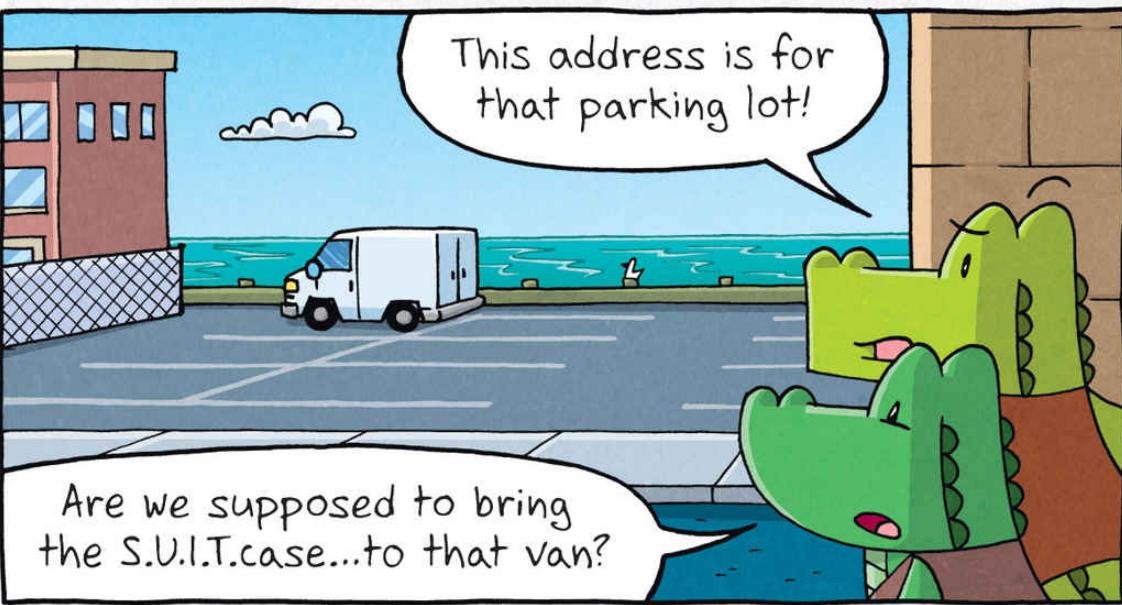
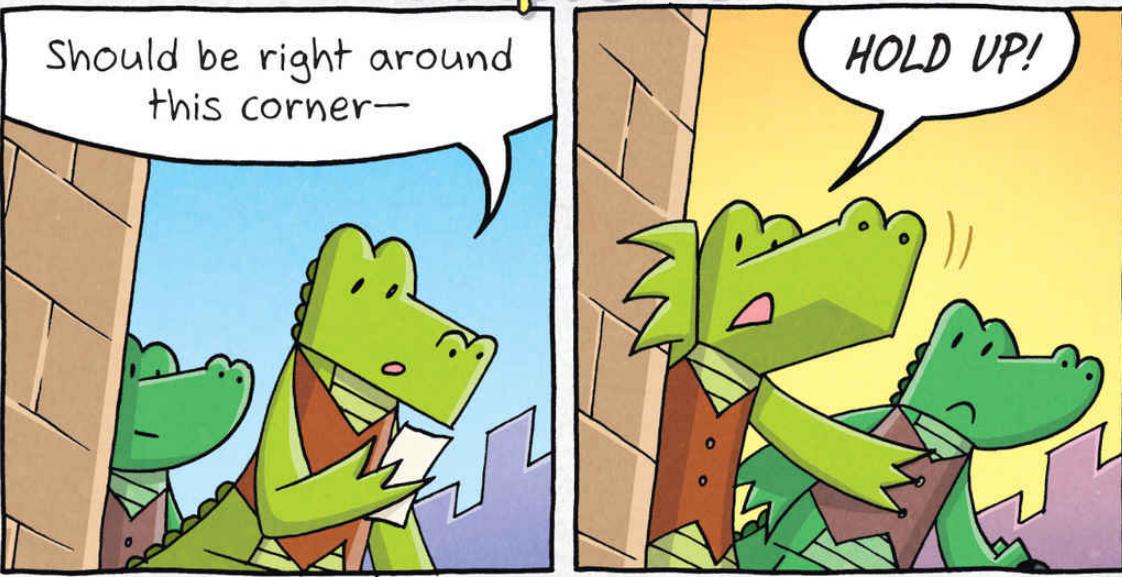
Hmm... This cross street is on the waterfront.



TO THE RIVER, MANGO!



Chapter 3





...the only gadgets I've got
are bells and whistles.



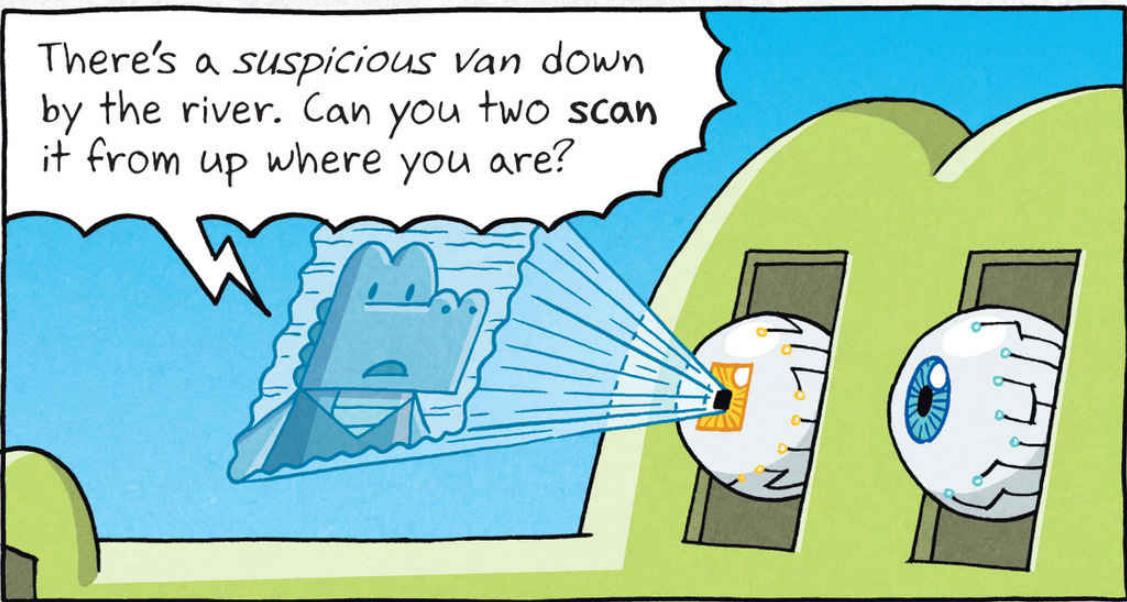
Ah-ha! We'll ask
the ORB units!

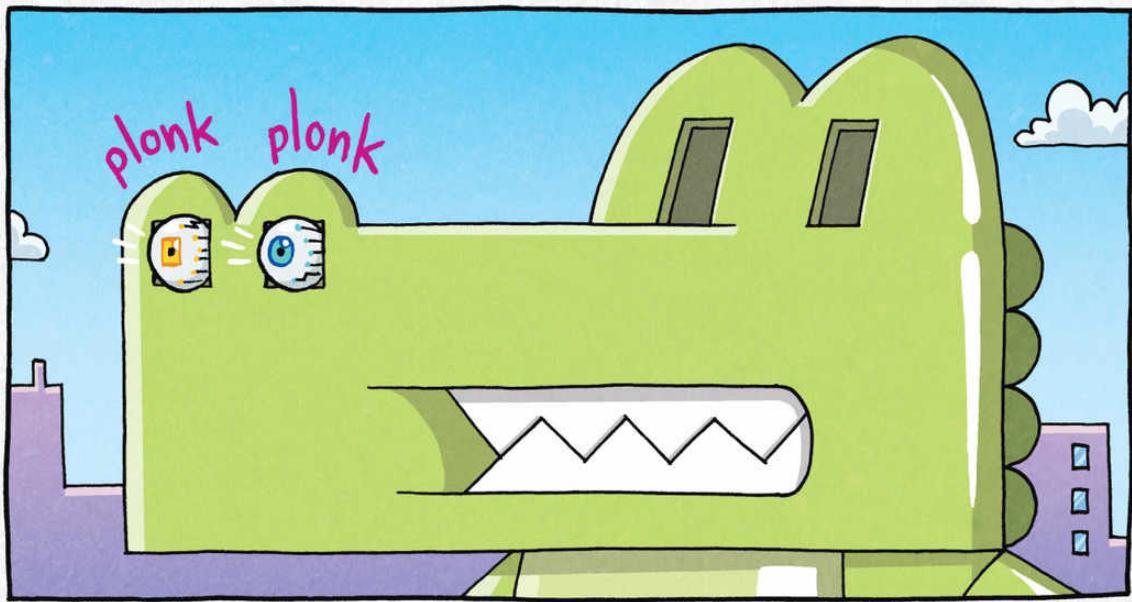
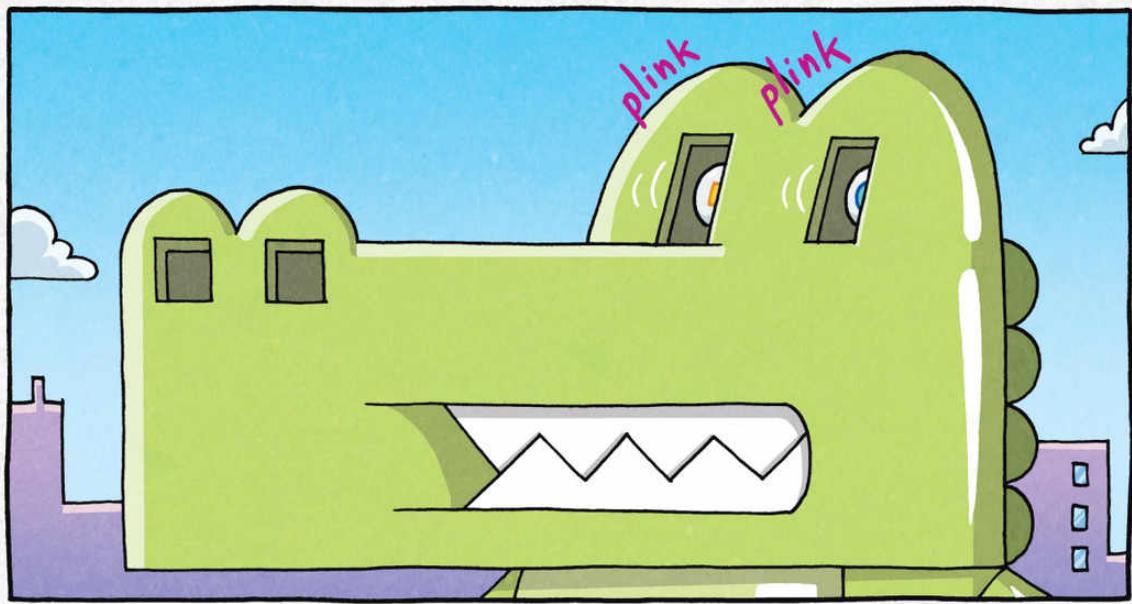
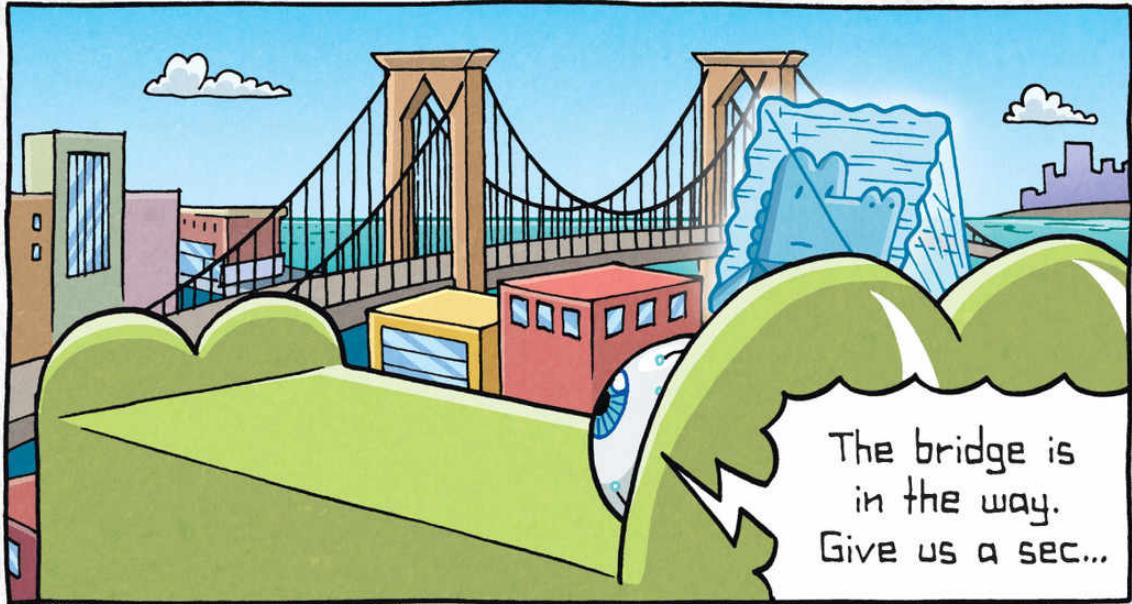


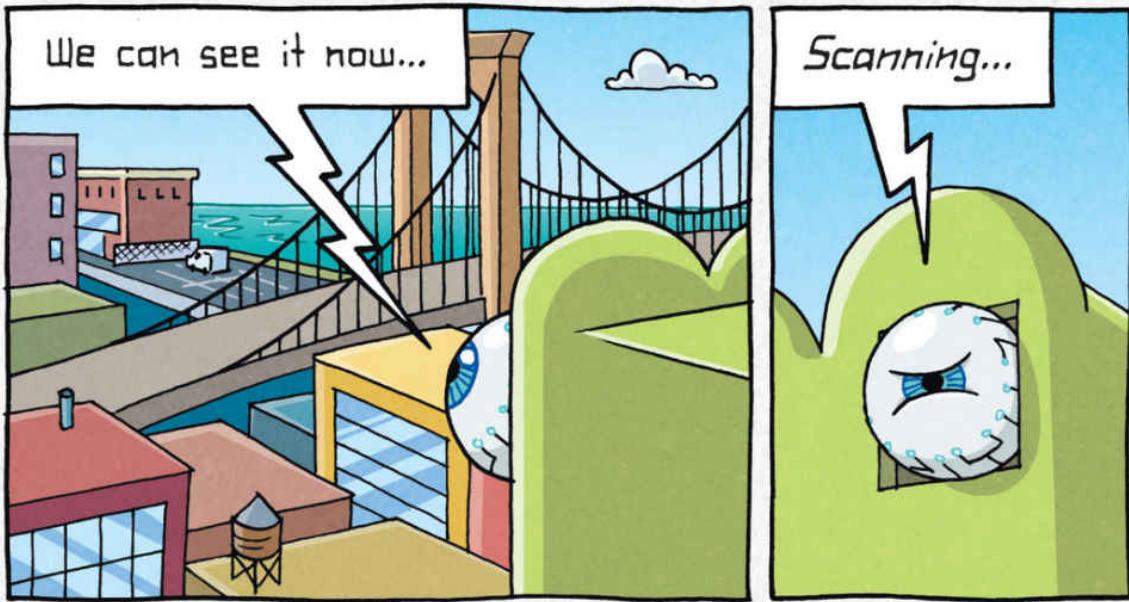
D-ORB! C-ORB!



There's a suspicious van down
by the river. Can you two scan
it from up where you are?













It does get a bit *lonely* in here, but this vacant lot doesn't allow **pets**, and all my plants keep dying.

So I bought this little **rock** to keep me company. You can't kill a rock!

It's called a **BOULDER BUDDY**.

They're the hot new thing, apparently.

Does it do any tricks?

It knows "sit" and "stay."

COOOOOOL! I want one!
Brash, check it out!

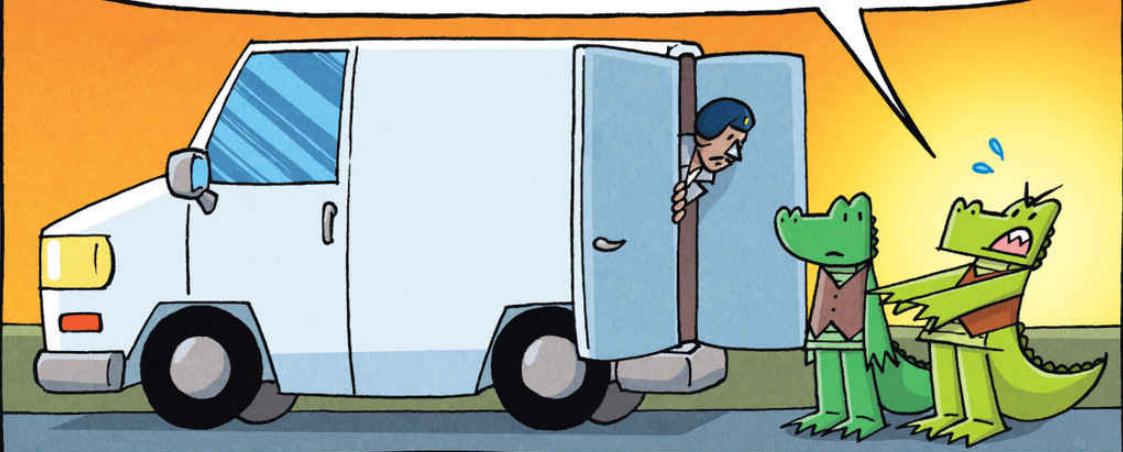
Eh, you see one rock, you've seen 'em all.

Anyway, thanks again for your service, gators.

I couldn't pick up my laundry in nothing but my tighty-whities!



YOU LIVE IN A VAN! NEXT TIME JUST DRIVE THERE AND HAVE SVEN BRING YOUR CLOTHES OUT TO YOU!



And risk losing this sweet parking spot?!



Soon...

Some "mission" **that** was. Is making deliveries all life has left in store for us?

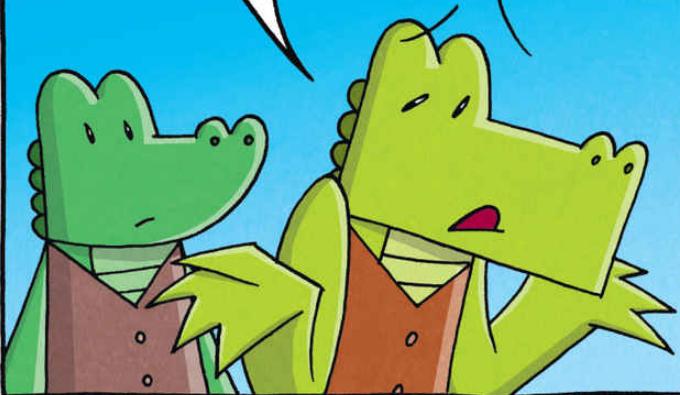
Would you rather someone have actually been in danger?



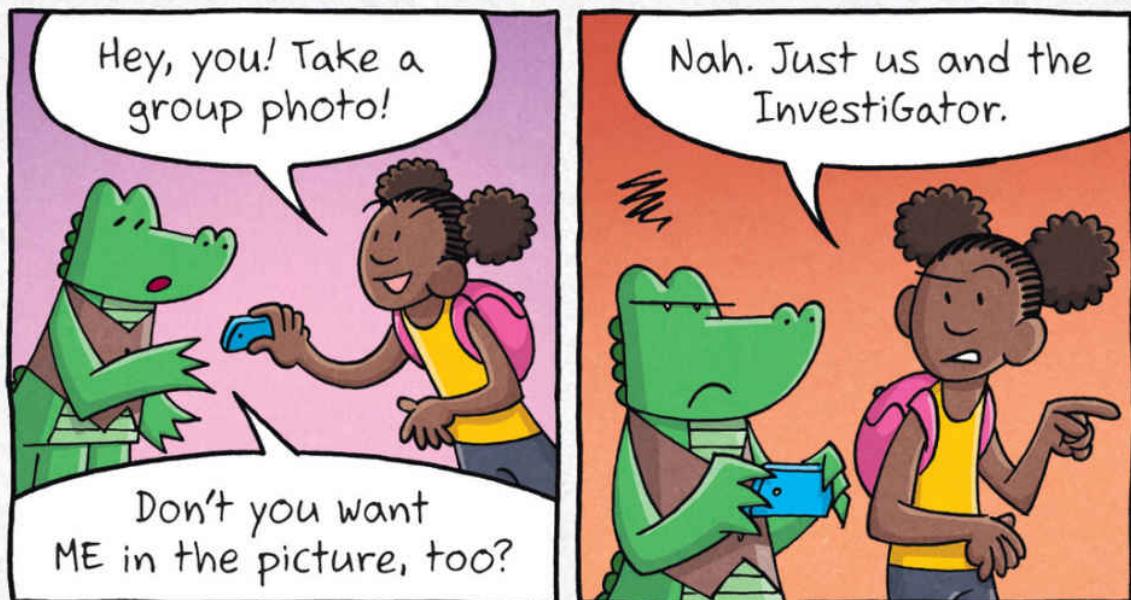
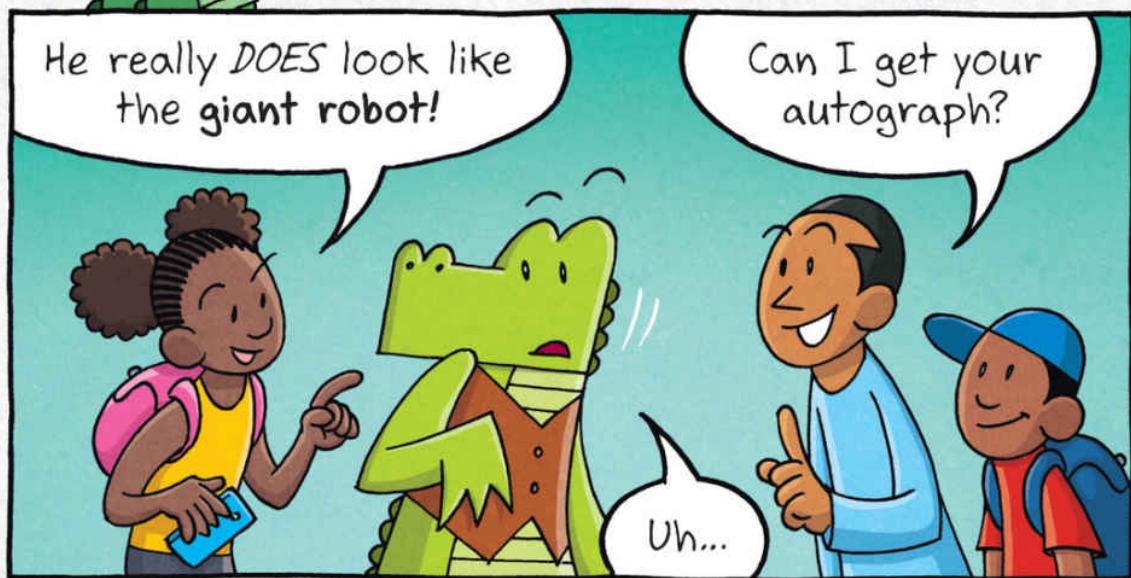
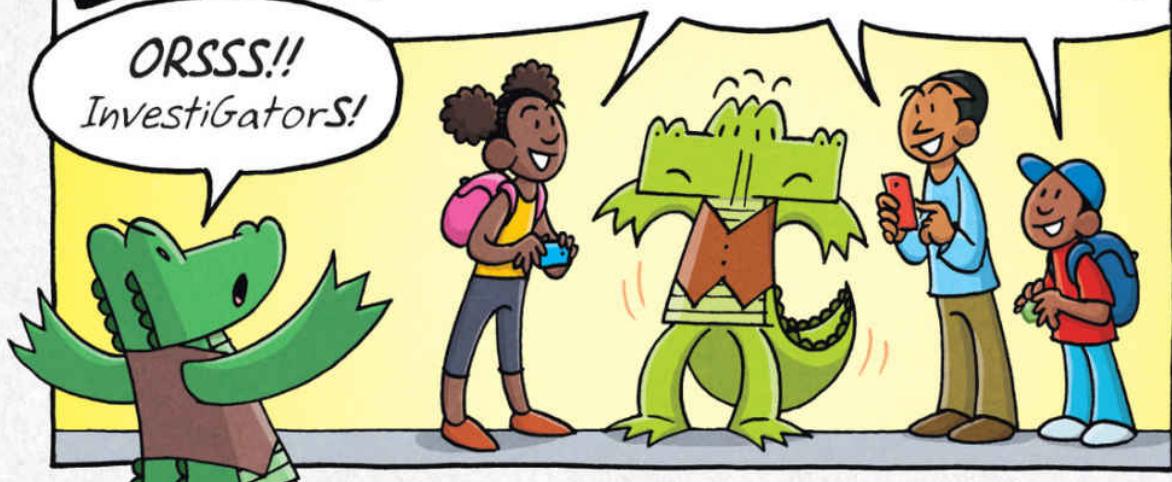
Of course not. But we **ARE** a **Special Undercover Investigation Team**. I didn't join S.U.I.T. to deal with **LAUNDRY**!

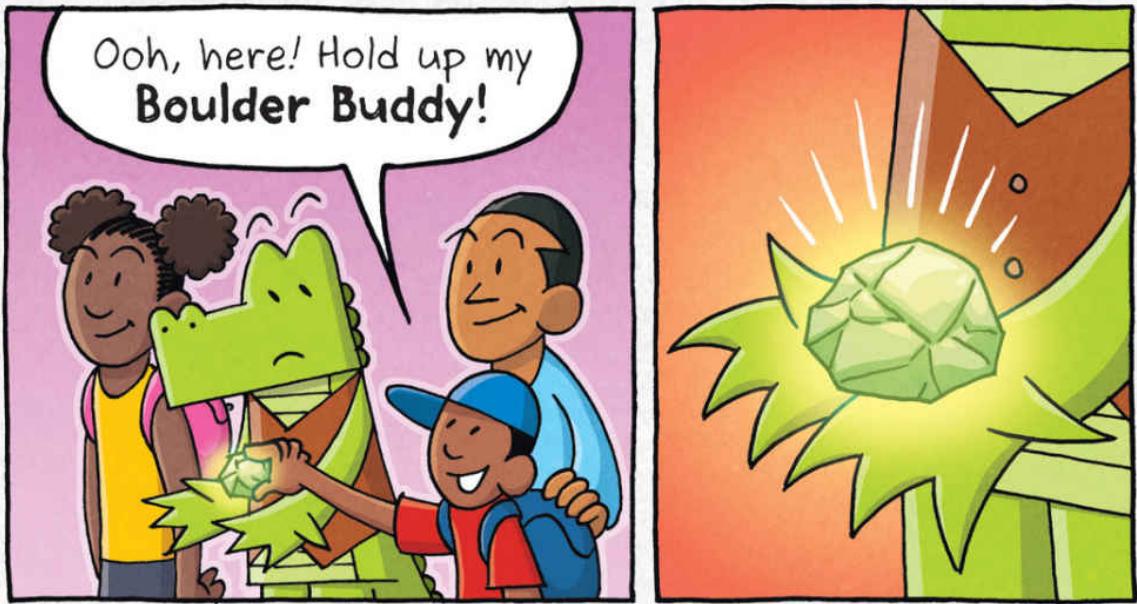
To be fair, all of S.U.I.T.'s secret acronyms **ARE** clothing related...

Maybe this city no longer needs the—



INVESTIGATOR!

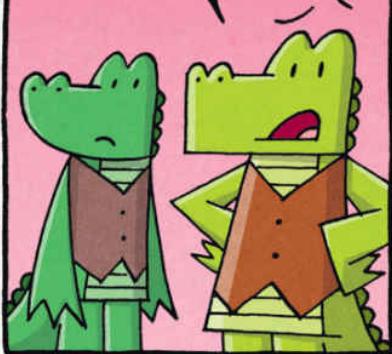




I guess we're not worthy of a photo with the famous InvestiGator.



THIS is the problem, Mango.



If a **REAL** crime to investigate ever comes along, it will be impossible to go **UNDERCOVER** when everyone knows who we are!

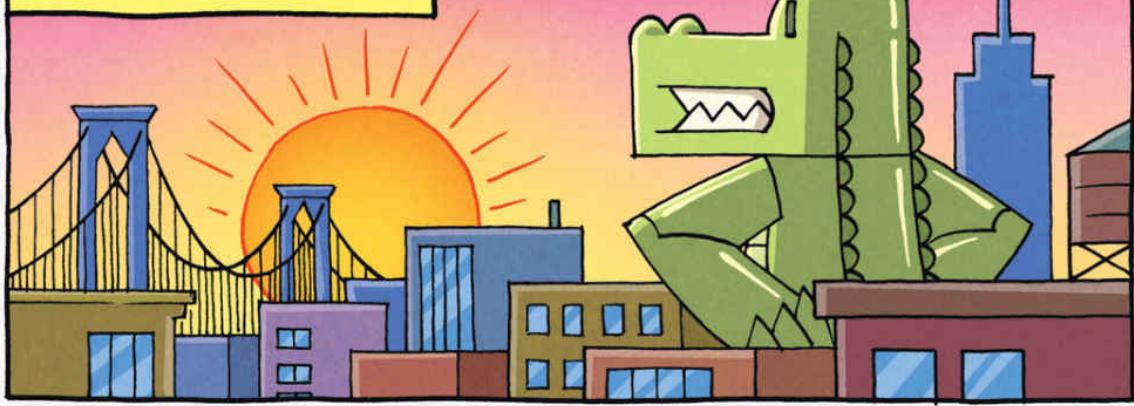


Technically, they only know who **YOU** are, Brash. Come on. We can face this challenge about your face when we get home.



Chapter 4

As the sun sets...



Welcome back, InvestiGators.
No suspicious activity to report.

I wonder if other S.U.I.T. agents are seeing any action.

The B-Team is in Bora Bora
busting bungalow burglars.

Ooh, let's check in on Cilantro!

Cilantro! How's it feel to officially be a field agent?

Hi, Mango! Well...

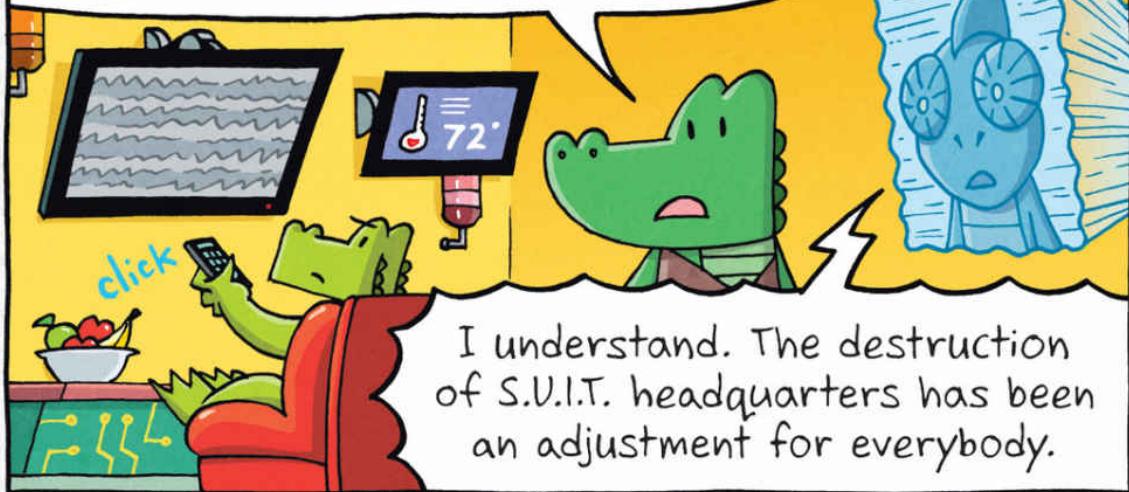
I'm investigating crop circles, so being a field agent feels exactly like being in a **CORNFIELD!**

Don't get caught in the **MAIZE**. You could be lost for **EARS** and **EARS!**

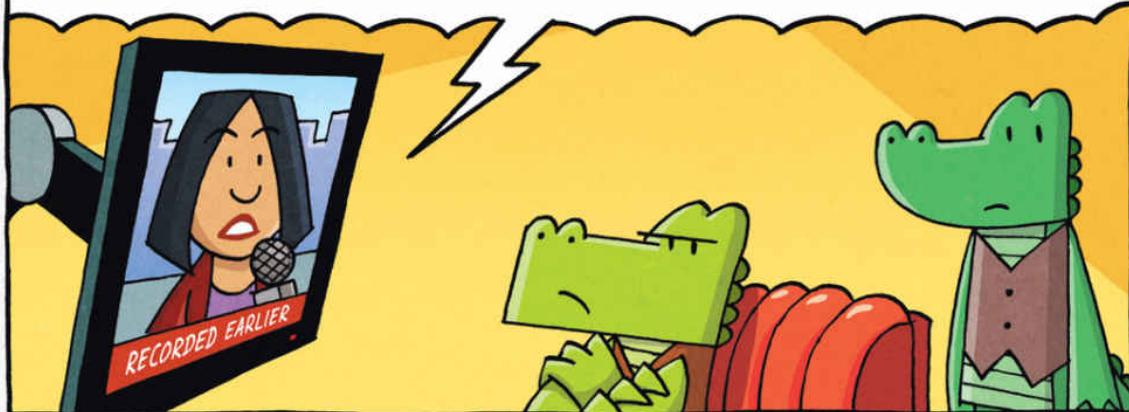
HA HA!

UGH! I'm fed up with your **CORNY** jokes!

Sorry, Cilantro. Brash has been feeling down in the dumps. I'd better go.



The city continues to rebuild after the loss of such a great institution left a hole in everyone's hearts...



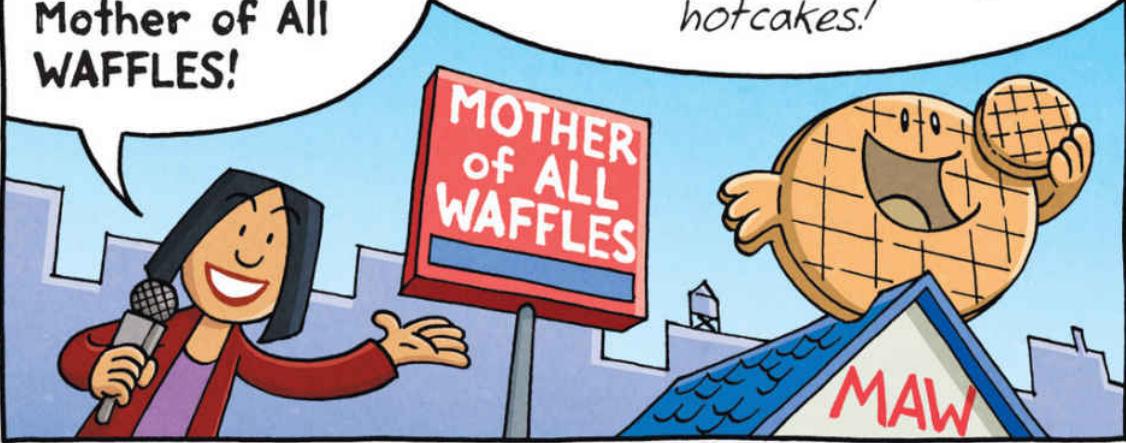
A DONUT hole!

Yes, the **Mother of All Donuts** is gone, having been trampled by giant ants.

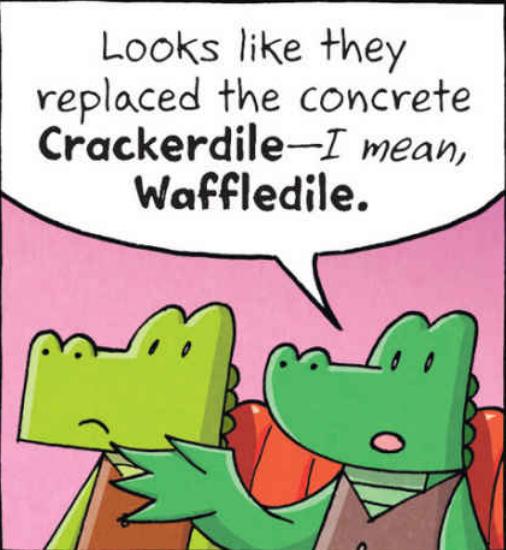


But business is
booming across
the street at the
**Mother of All
WAFFLES!**

Their Boom-Chicken-Wa-Waffles
are selling like hotcakes! Even
their **HOTCAKES** are selling like
hotcakes!



Profits have tripled since
the installation of the
MAW's new roof mascot.



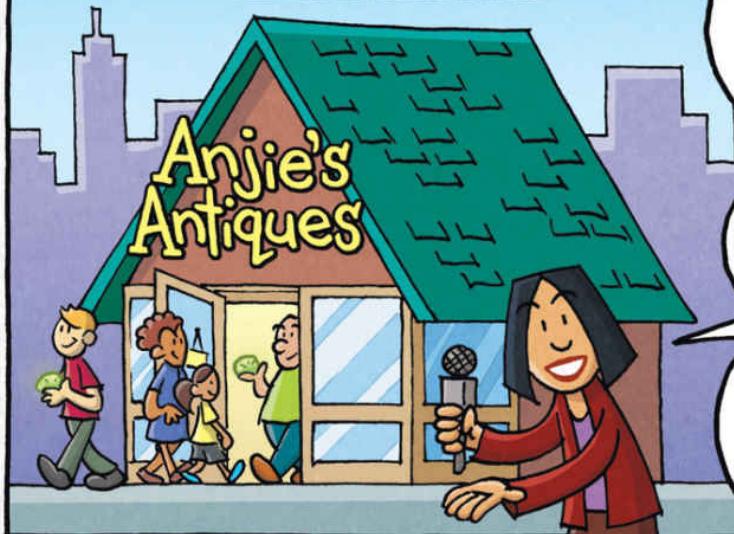
Looks like they
replaced the concrete
Crackerdile—I mean,
Waffledile.

When I first learned Daryl actually survived that
baking accident and had turned into an **evil Saltine
cracker**, I'd wonder if there was any piece of my
former friend and partner left.



There were **ONLY**
pieces of him left
after you—uh, that
is, **MegaRoboBrash**—
crushed him into
rubble.

Now, what was once a donut hole
is a **whole new store!**



And by
NEW I mean OLD,
because it's an
antiques shop.

**Anjie's
Antiques!**

Anjie's Antiques
is the only place
you can buy...

...BOULDER BUDDIES!

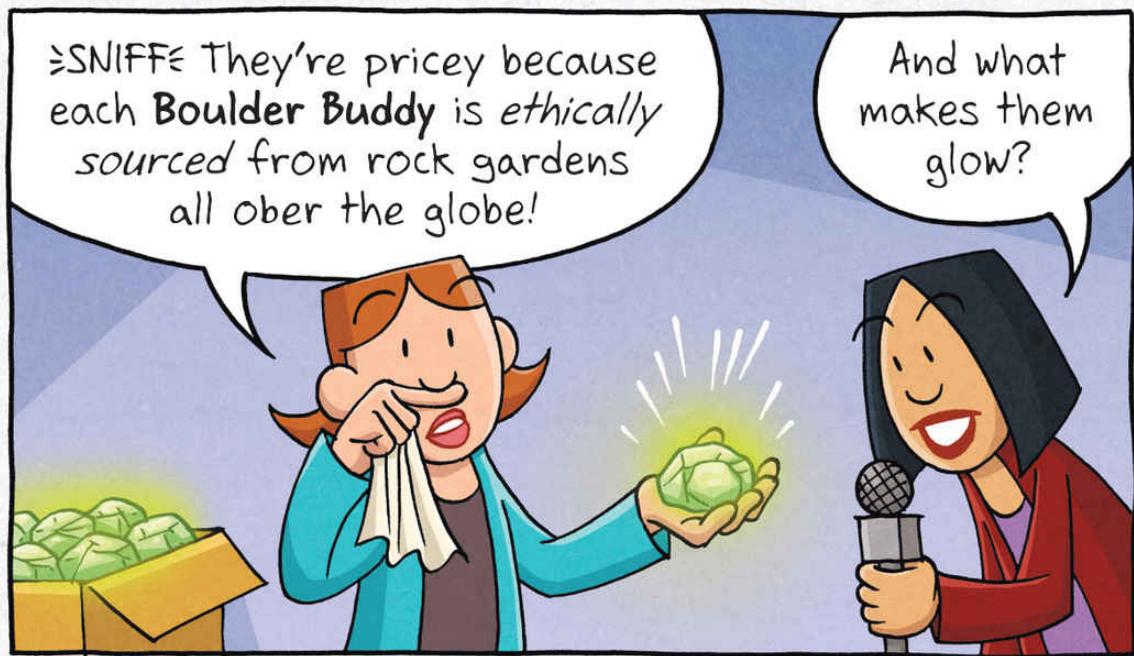
The hot new collectible
that'll rock your world,
and brainchild of the
shop's owner, Anjie!

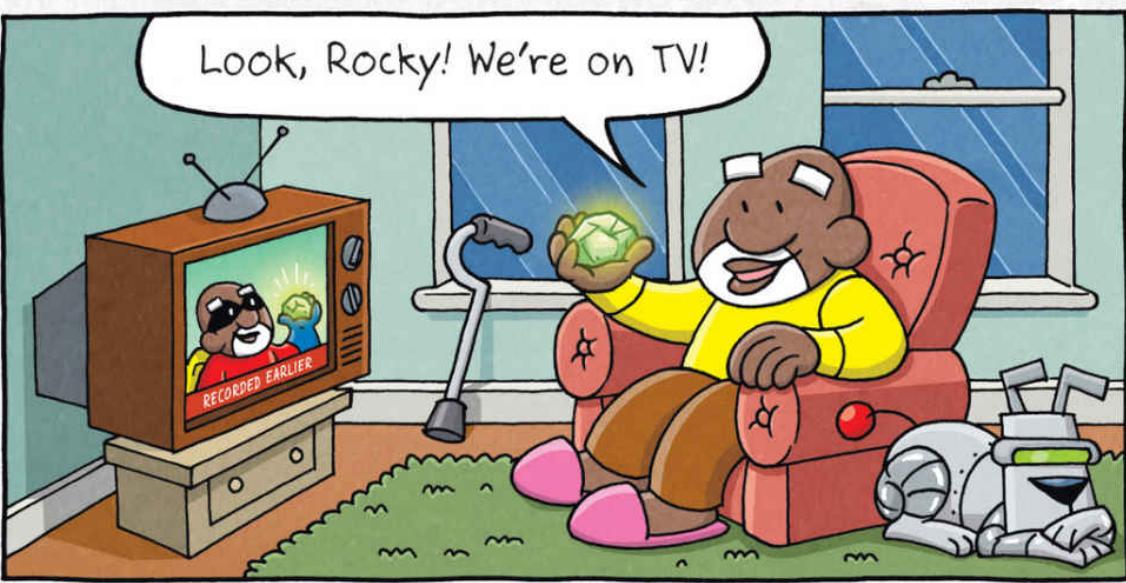
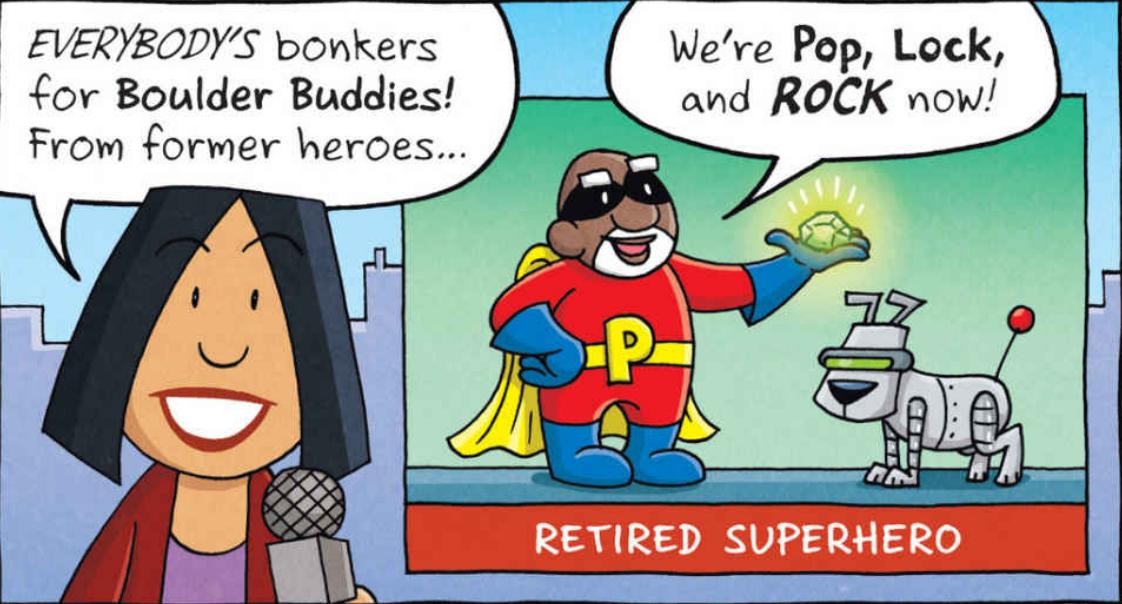


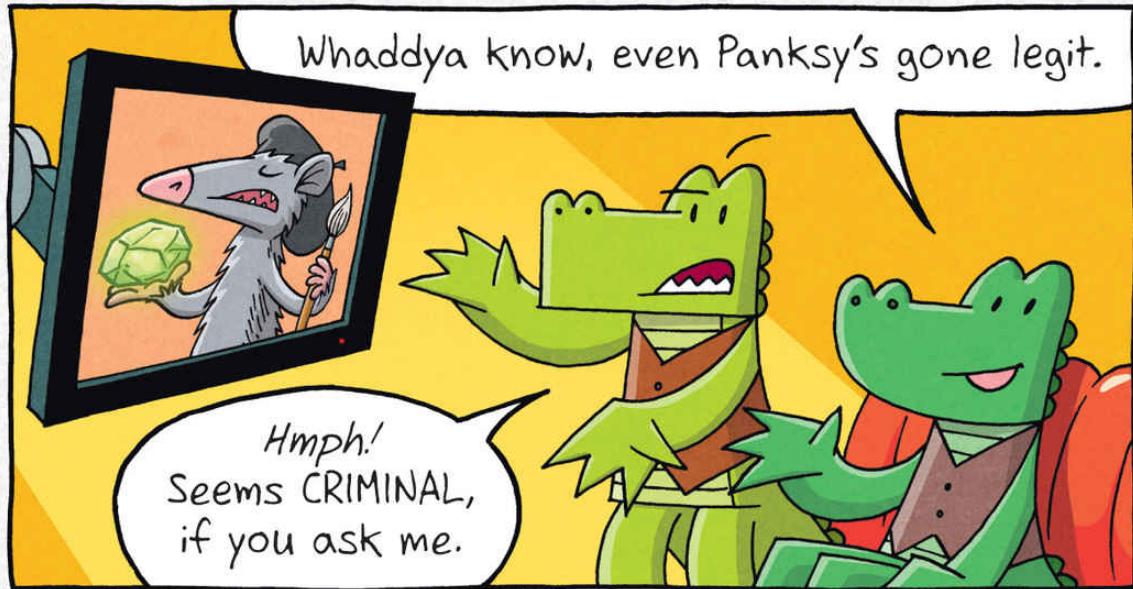
Everything OLD is NEW
at my antiques shop, Cici.
And what could be older
than rocks?

Well, the **\$100 price tag**
is certainly nothing to
sneeze at!









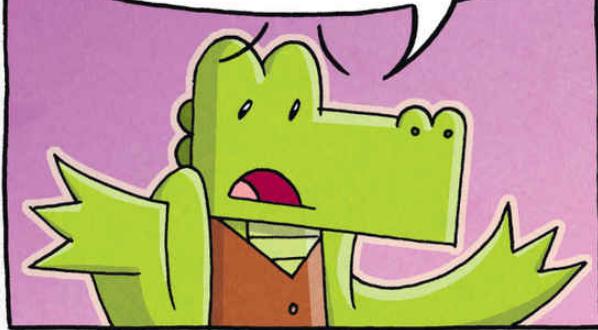
Crime isn't gone—just harder to SEE! Criminals are getting **smarter**. More **cautious**! Who knows, maybe they've all huddled up somewhere to coordinate all their criminal business **RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE???**
These rocks could be part of something even **MORE NEFAIRIOUS!**



BRASH! Are you saying the Boulder Buddies are... **EVIL?**!



Evil...? Er, no. I just think they're a **rip-off**.

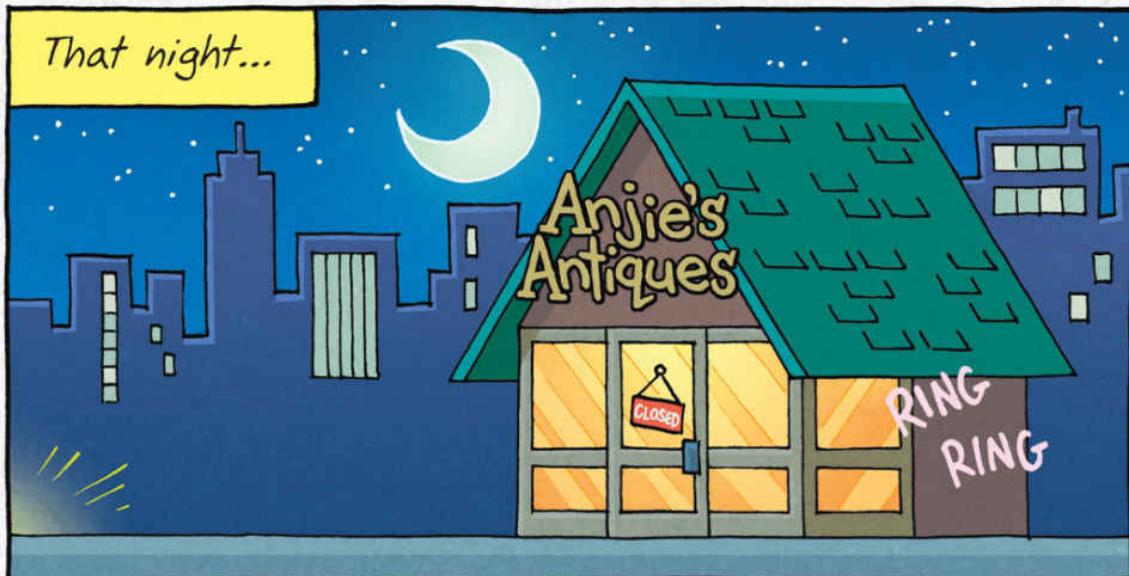


Good! 'Cause **I'M** gonna buy one for myself first thing in the morning!

G'NIGHT!



That night...



Oh, hi, Mom. Yup, working late.
These Boulder Buddies are
selling like hotcakes! People
will buy ANYTHING, I tell ya.

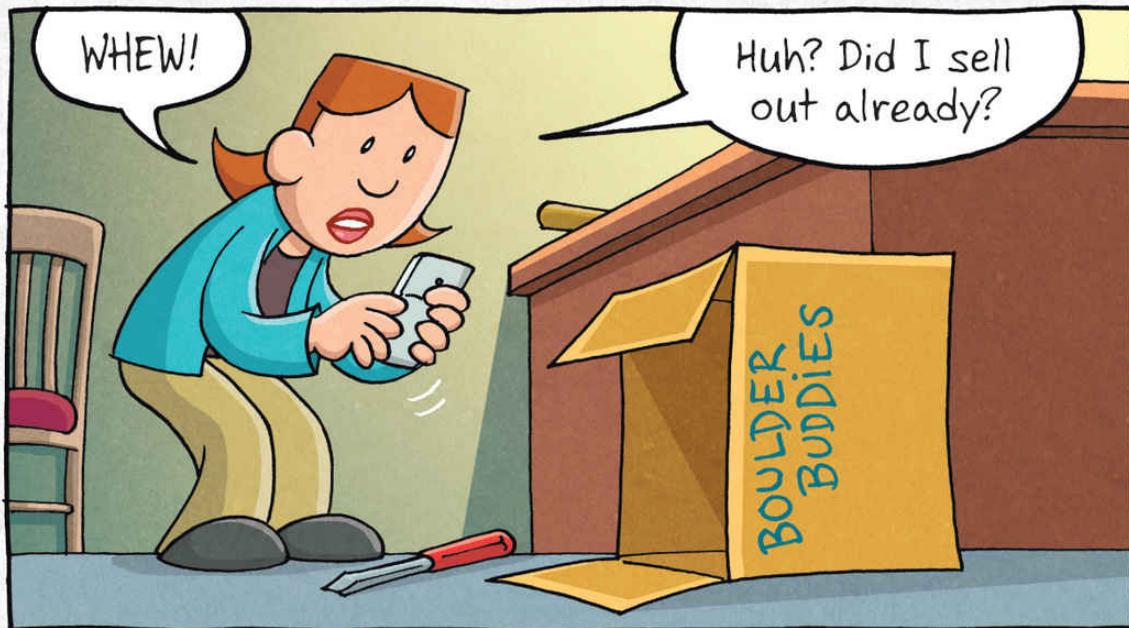


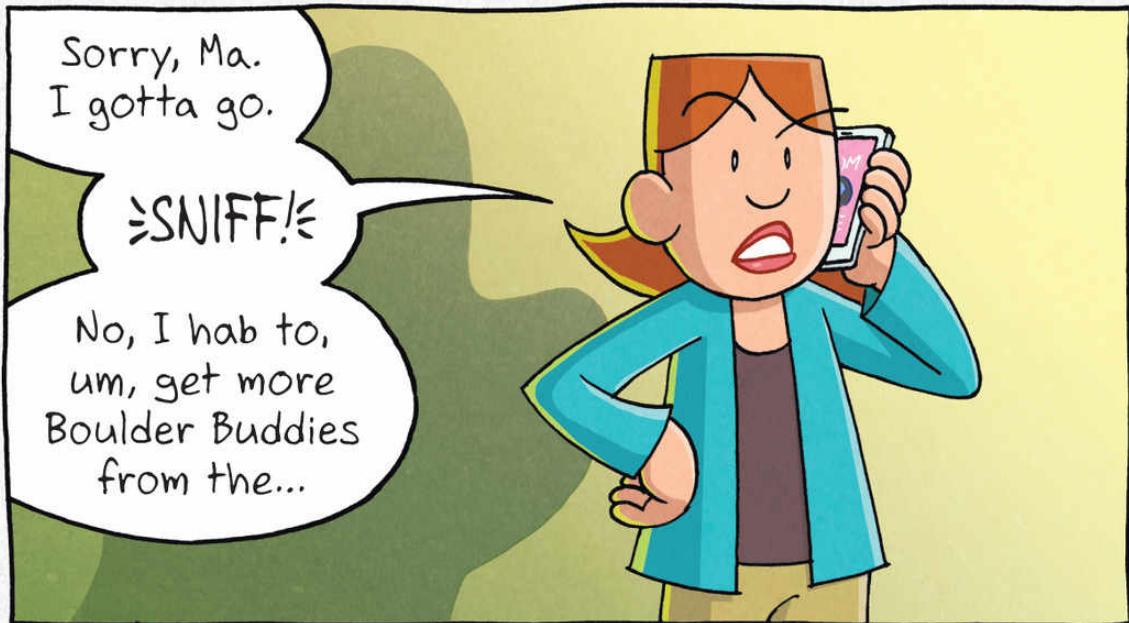
We're closed... Huh?
Thought I heard
someWAh—



AH-AH-AH-

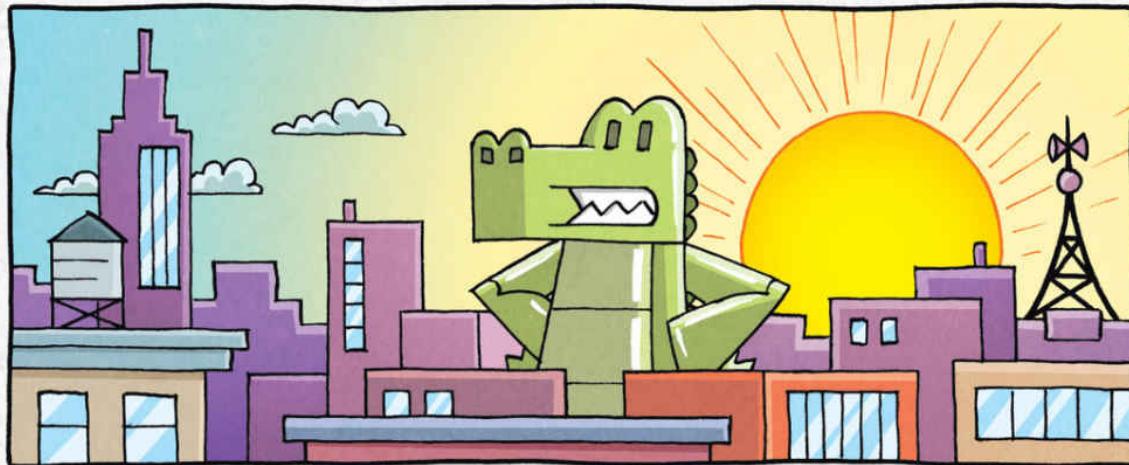
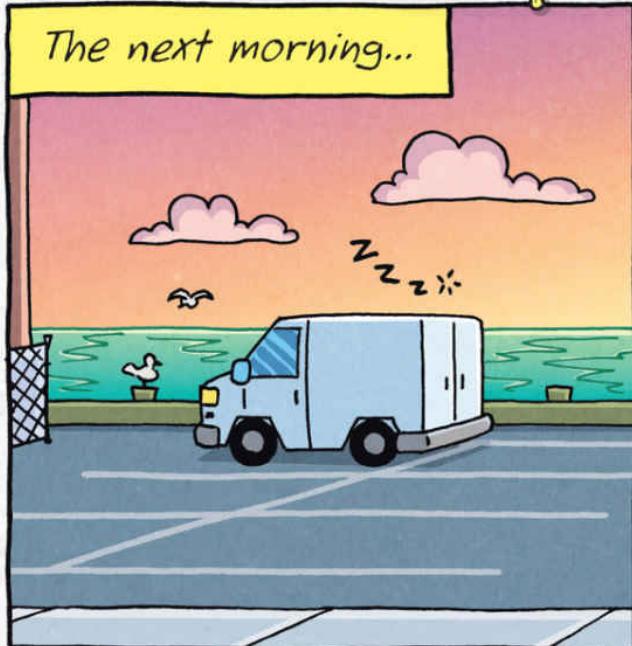


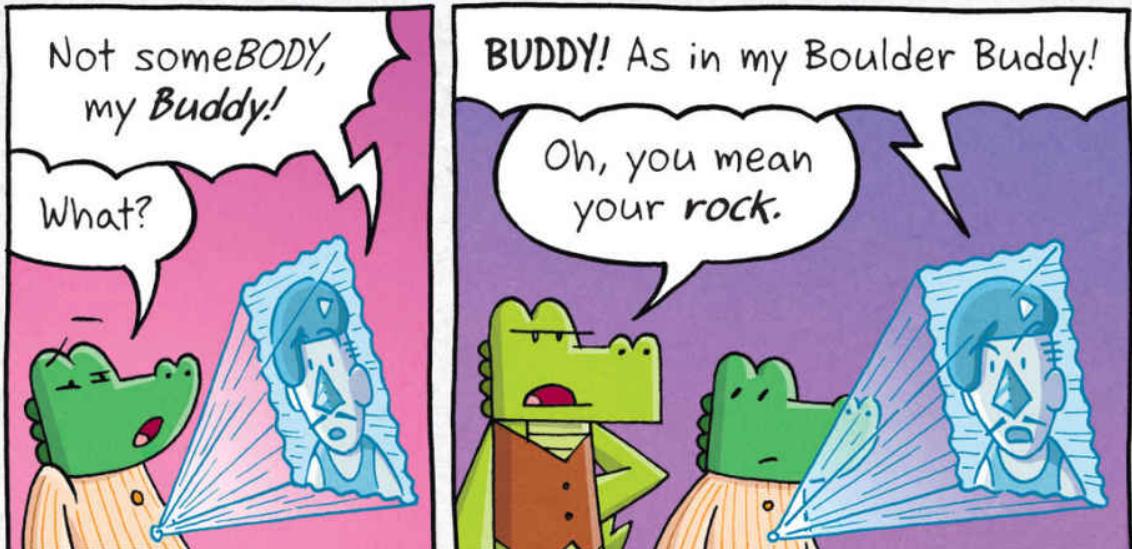




Chapter 5

The next morning...





CORRECT! Somebody *stole* Buddy in the night! I woke up and there was no sign of my stone companion.

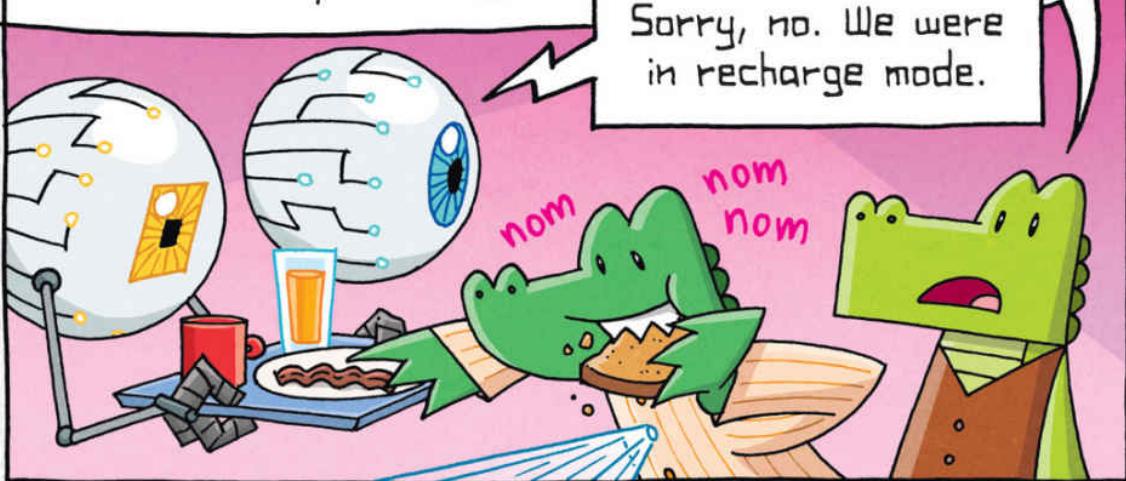


Breakfast time, Agents!



C-ORB, D-ORB... Did you see anyone steal the G.I.'s Boulder Buddy last night?

Sorry, no. We were in recharge mode.



Some surveillance system you are!



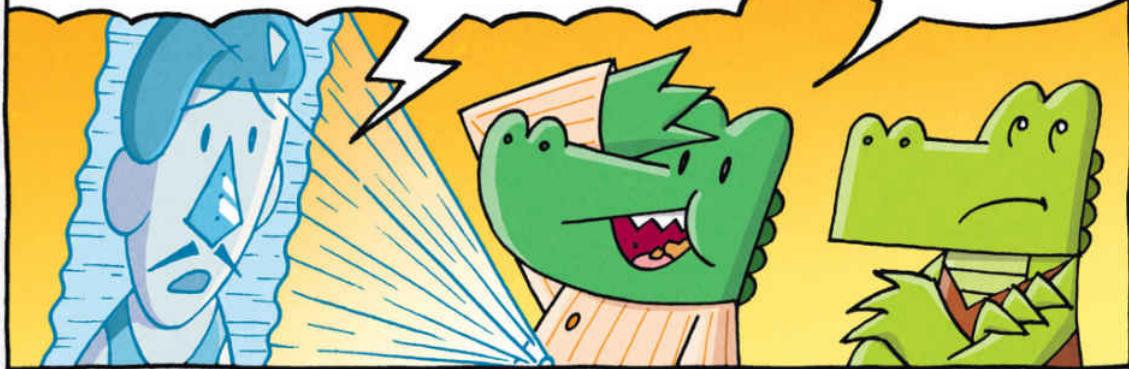
You know we're technically *butlers*, right?

AAHME!

Oh! Sorry, sir.

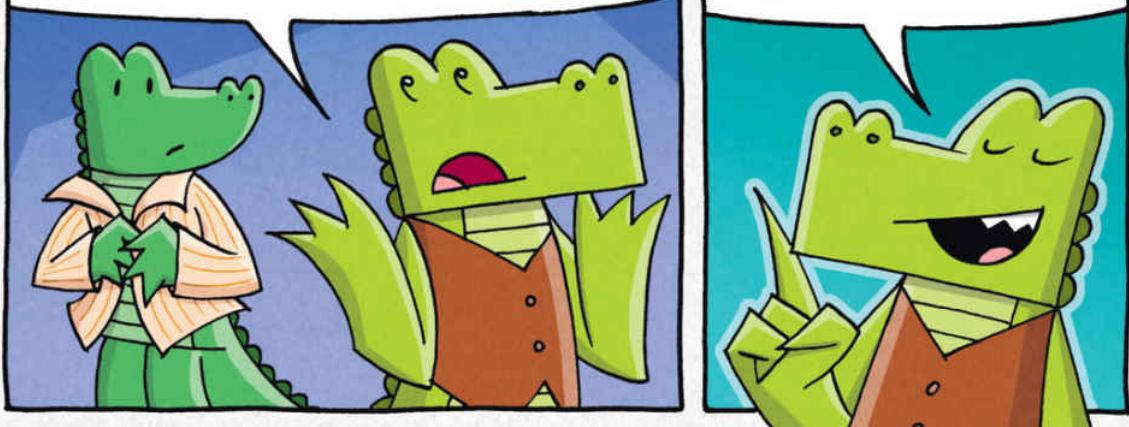
Mango and Brash, your **mission** is to find out who took my Boulder Buddy! I'm worried about the little guy!

We'll leave no stone unturned!



FEH! Some "mission." The General Inspector probably *misplaced* that silly rock.

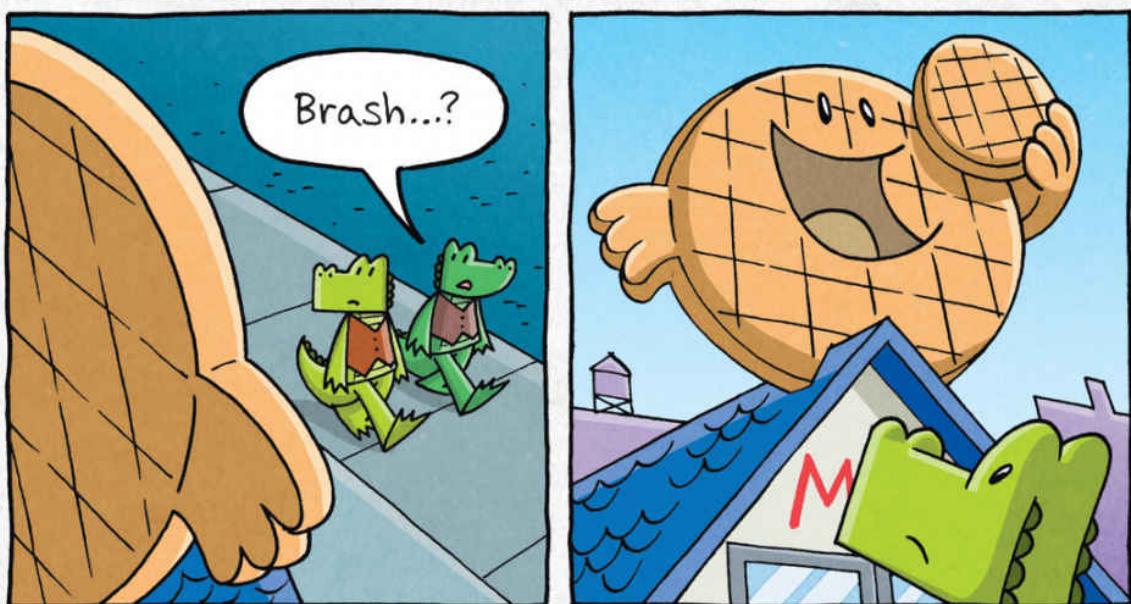
I know exactly how to solve *THIS* mystery, Mango...

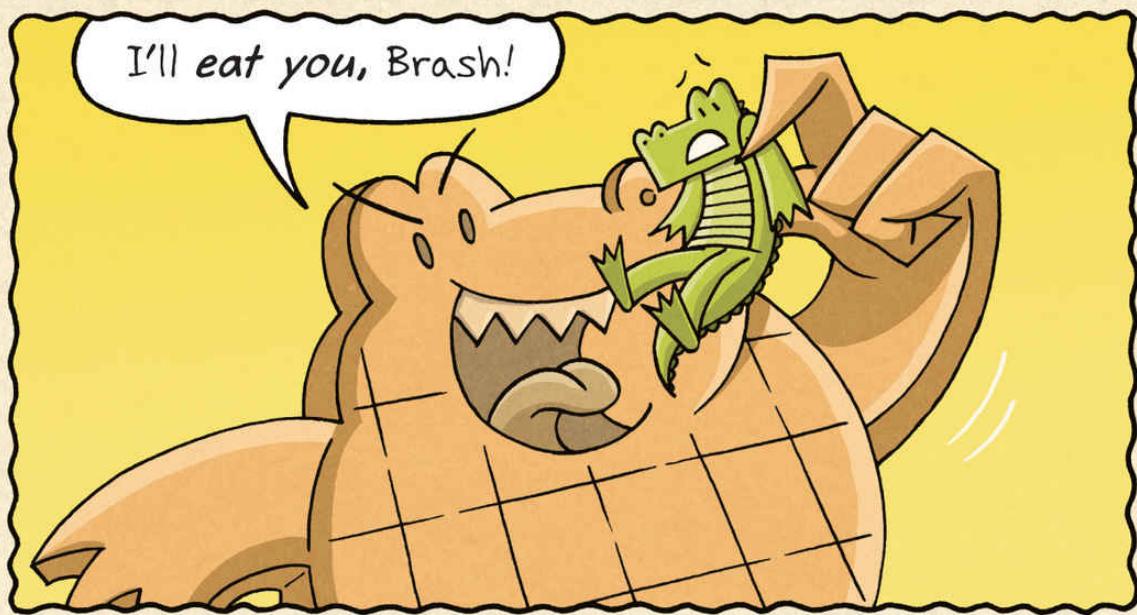


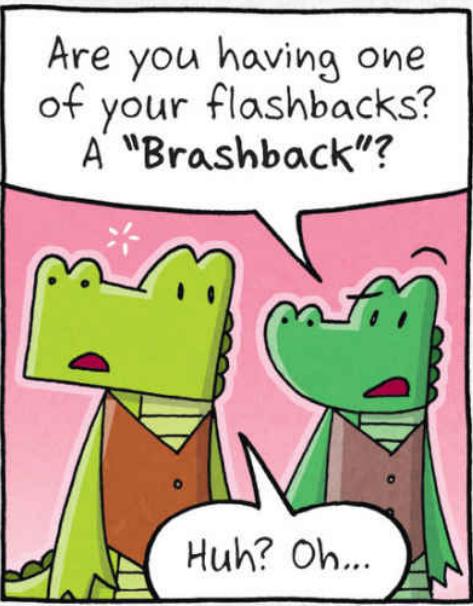
We'll go to Anjie's Antiques and buy him a **NEW** Boulder Buddy. He'll never know the difference!

Hmm, **OKAY...**
But if you want my silence, you gotta buy one for **ME**, too!









My daughter Anjie, of Anjie's Antiques. She's **MISSING!**



Oh, hello. Are you the InvestiGator's friend?



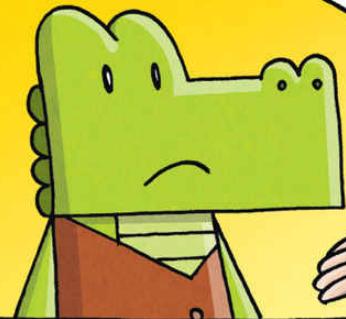
Ma'am, tell us what happened.

I was on the phone with Anjie last night. She was working late and had sold out of Boulder Buddies.

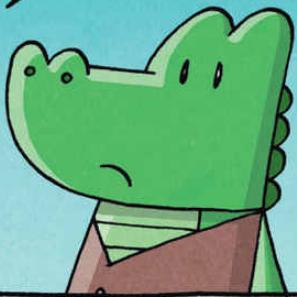


She told me she had
to get more from the
Rock Mobster!

ROCK MOBSTER?



That's who she said! Then the line went
silent, and when she didn't pick up again,
I drove over as fast as I could!



When I got here, all
I found was her phone.
And it's completely busted!



I don't know how my
Anjie got mixed up with
criminals! But, please,
can you help?



This is GREAT! A **REAL** crime to investigate!

What?

I MEAN—leave this to us, ma'am! We'll find your daughter.

We can take it from here. You should go home and try to get some rest.

I'm too worried to sleep. But I do need to feed my cat.

Don't worry, we're on the case!

Thank you, InvestiGator. And you, too, InvestiGator's friend!

Chapter 6



And **EXPENSIVE!** This lamp is **\$1,200!** Maybe the Boulder Buddies **ARE** a scam.

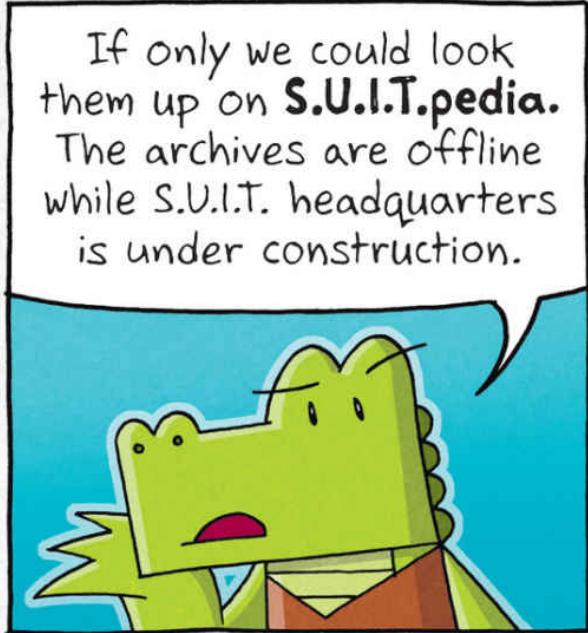
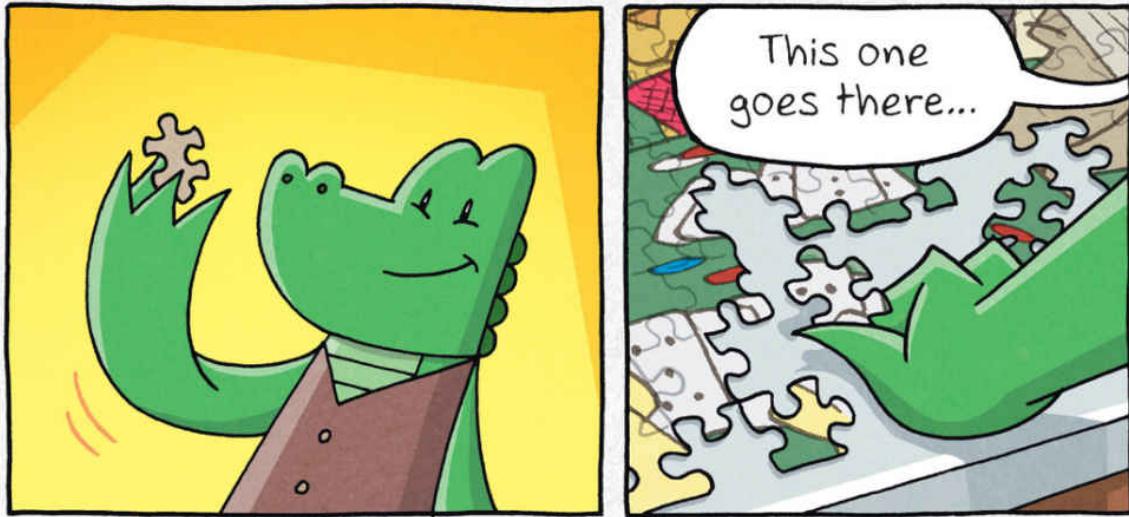
If the **MOB** is involved, this whole place could be a racket!

Like this tennis racket?

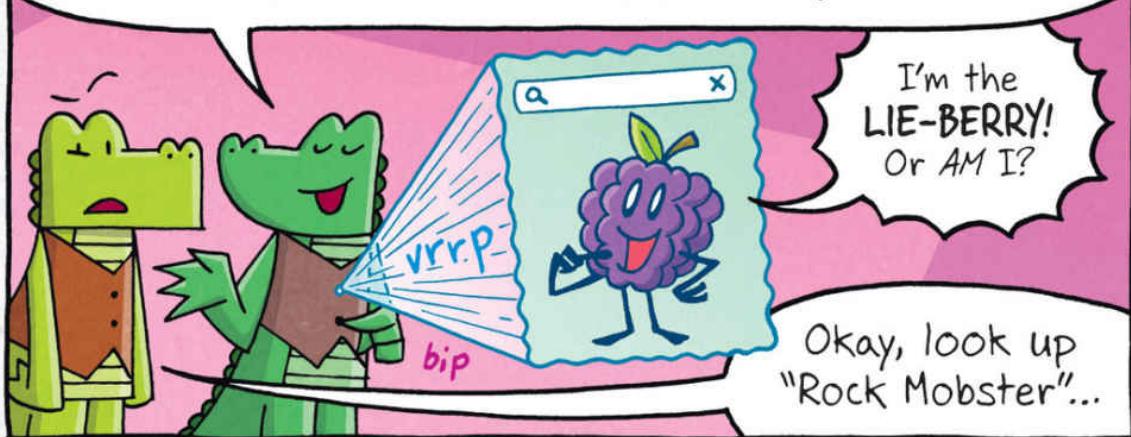
Mango, what I'm saying is, everything in here could be fake or stolen, and Anjie is selling it all **FOR** the mob.

Anjie said she was going to get more Boulder Buddies from the **Rock Mobster**. So figuring out who **THAT** is seems to be our best lead for finding her.

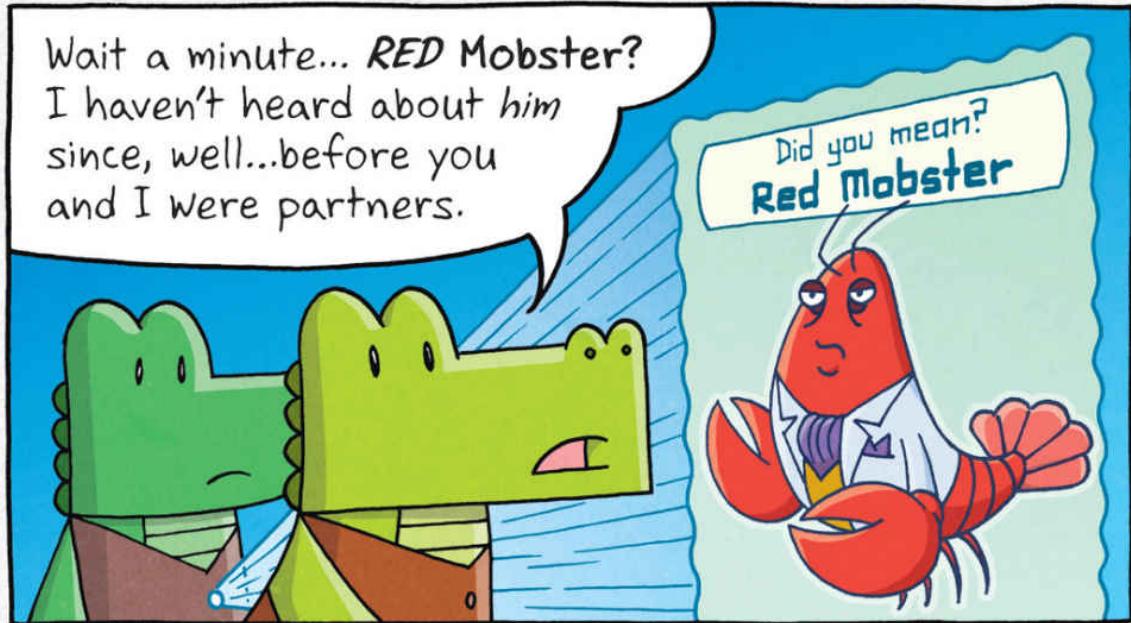
BRASH! I think I found a piece of the puzzle!



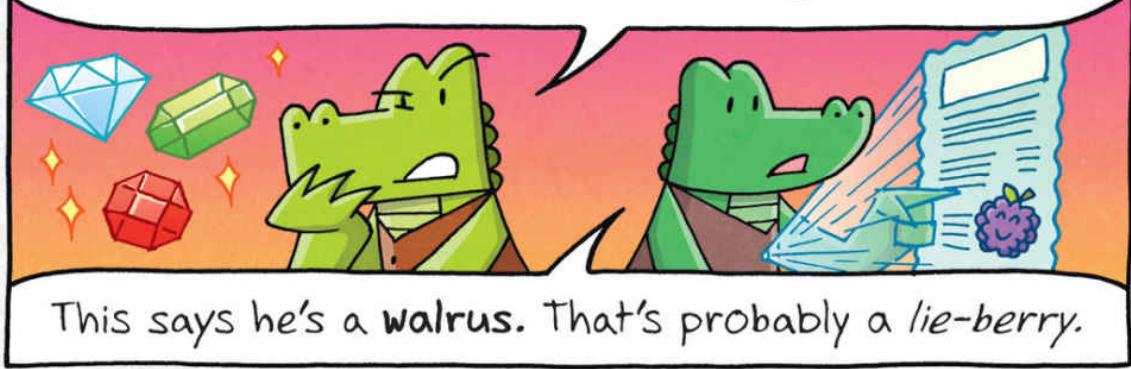
No, the **LIE-BERRY** is a website that has all sorts of facts about anything and anyone! But it also throws in a couple of lies to keep you on your toes.



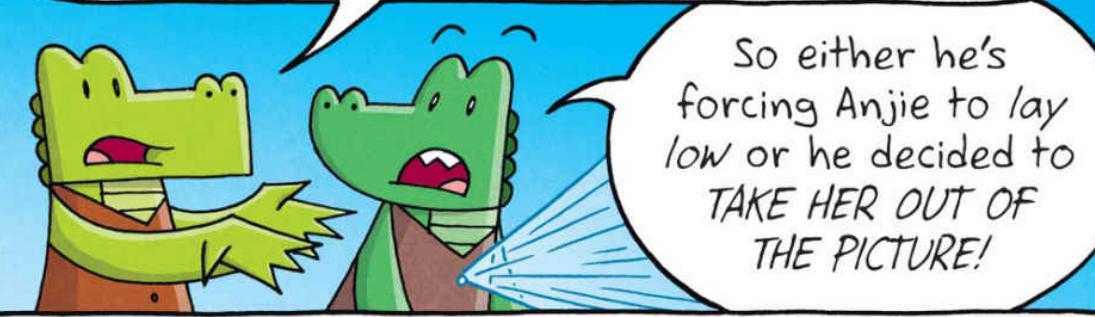
Wait a minute... **RED** Mobster?
I haven't heard about him
since, well...before you
and I were partners.



Red had his claws in all sorts of shady dealings. Like
counterfeit gems, diamonds, and other **hot rocks**!
He **HAS** to be the **ROCK MOBSTER** Anjie mentioned!



Red wouldn't be happy that Anjie's made Boulder Buddies into *REALLY* hot rocks. Their popularity would draw unwanted **attention** to his illegal operations!



So either he's forcing Anjie to *lay low* or he decided to **TAKE HER OUT OF THE PICTURE!**



We have to find Red Mobster *fast!* Where would this urchin be hiding out?



This says he's in the **garbage business**. Is that a *lie-berry*?

That's just a sly way of saying **organized crime**.



Well, it says he's also opened a nightclub. But there's **FIFTY** names listed! **Forty-nine** of these are gonna be *lie-berries*! It'll take **hours** to narrow down.

Welp, better get started.

Hours later...

Has it really been hours?
Feels like just the next page.

Ah-HA! **ANY FIN GOES!**
That one *HAS* to be Red
Mobster's nightclub.

We should've
gone through these
alphabetically.

Could Red be **stealing**
back the Boulder Buddies
Anjie sold to people?

Maybe Anjie Wasn't
supposed to **SELL** them
in the first place!



We're gonna need new V.E.S.T.s to solve **THIS** mystery.
To A.R.M.S., Mango! I mean—to Arm's, Mango!



Chapter 7

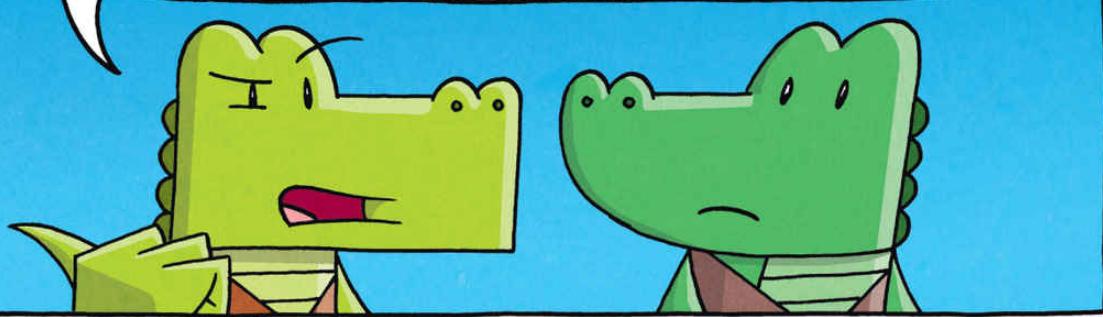


No, I mean we're going undercover as **MOBSTERS!**

Oh, I gotcha. I'll see what I can whip up in the back. Wait right here.



Armando's Boulder Buddy is also missing. Not even a laundromat is safe from the mob!



TA-DA!

The latest in criminal fashion for the gangster on the go!



V.E.S.T.s loaded with plenty of gadgets you'll never use, plus matching overcoats and fedoras!



Hey, what's the dill with the pickles?

What, didn't you know mobsters love pickles?

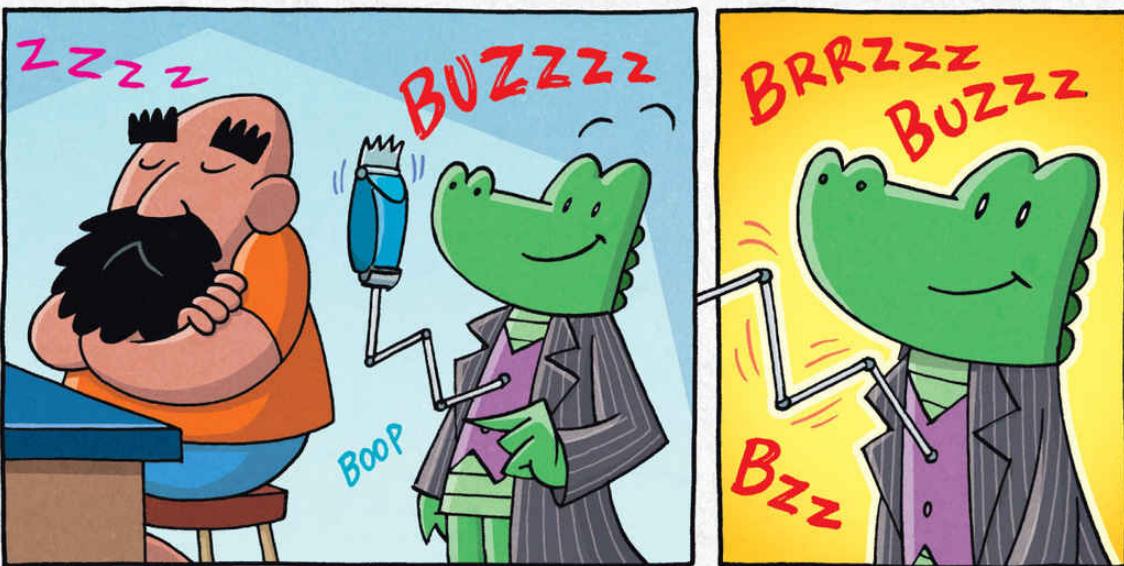
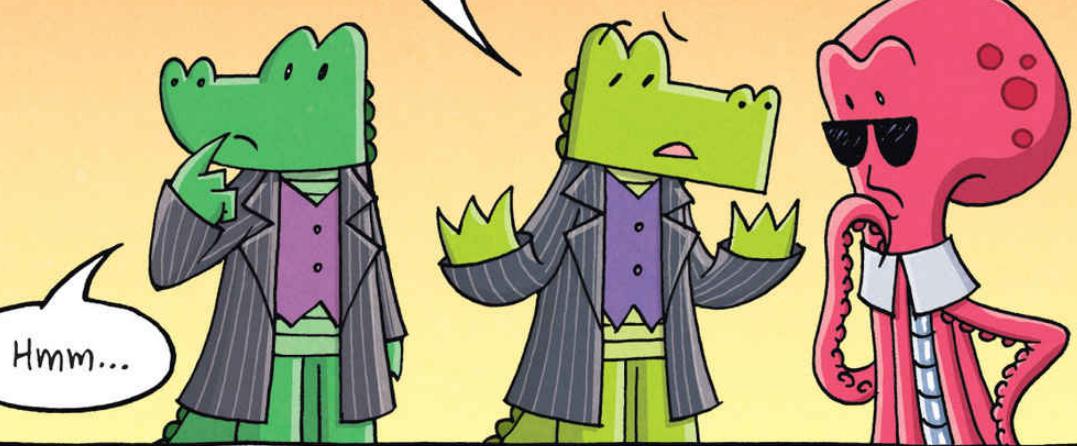


Smooooooth...
What is this, velvet?

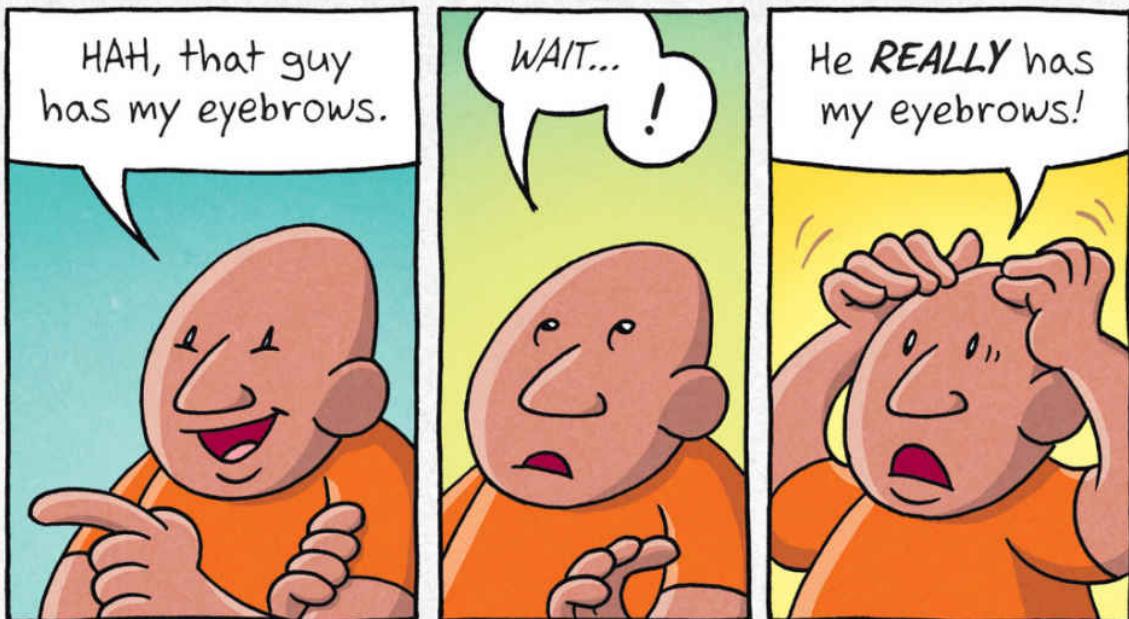
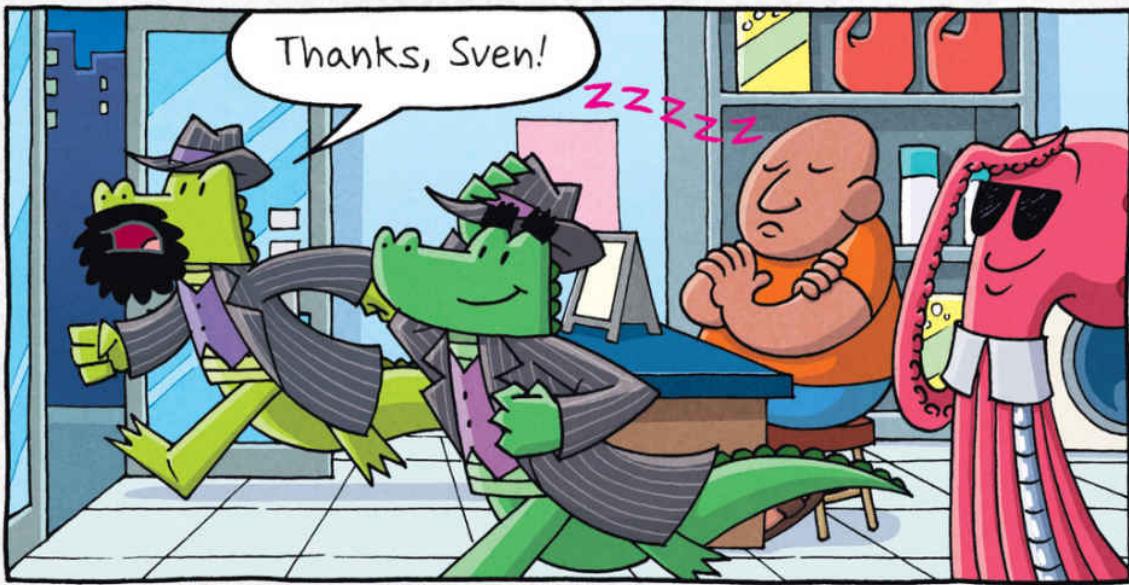
Nice work,
Sven.



Still, I'm a little worried this won't be *enough* of a disguise.







Chapter 8



Brash, we're a **Special Undercover Investigation Team!**
I know you're worried about being recognized, but
Anjie's **LIFE** could be on the line here!

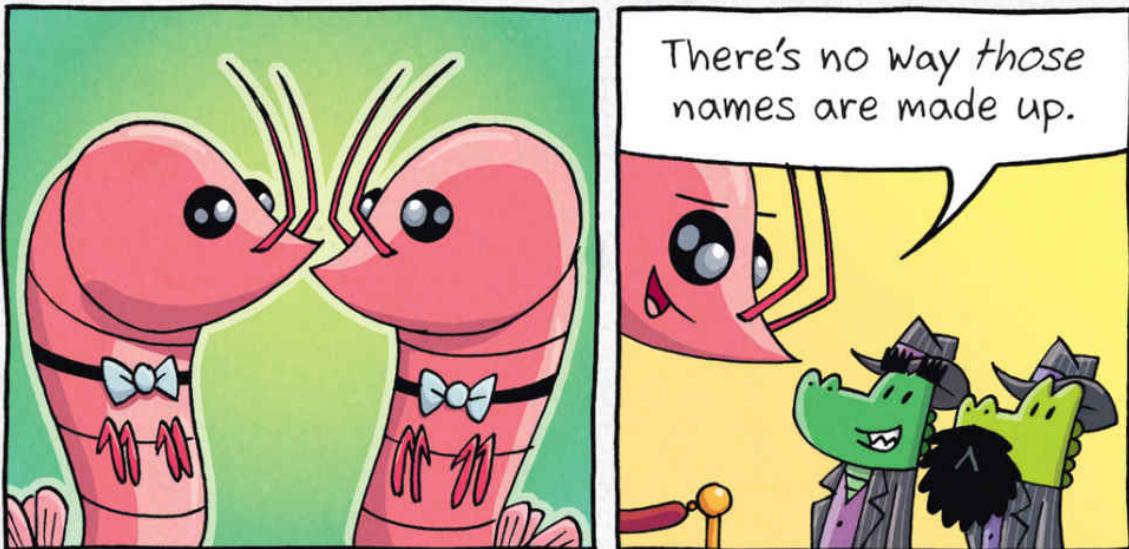
You're right, Mango.

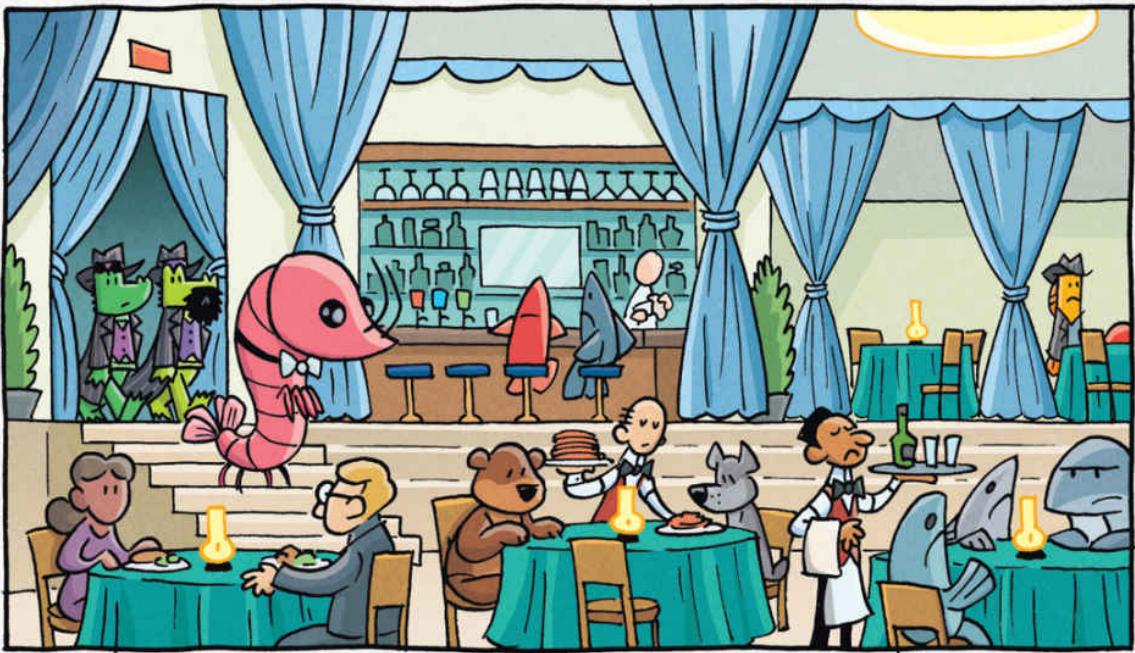
The stakes will be
high...but facing risks
to save others is what
being a **secret agent**
is all about!

Just try not to draw attention to your face.
I'll talk our way past these shrimp.

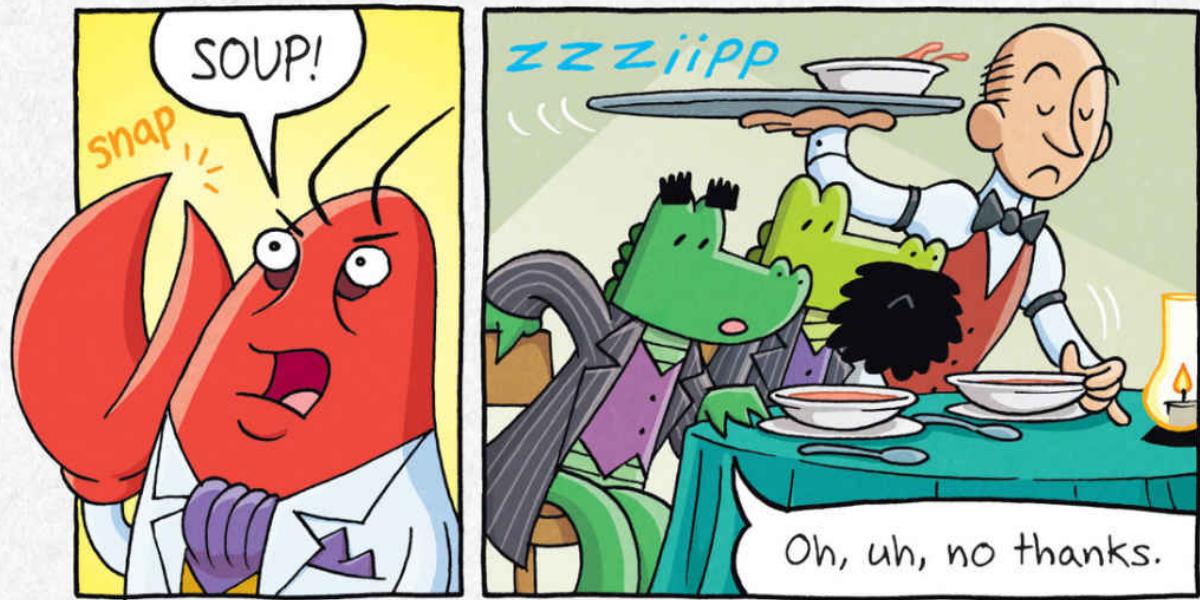
Who you callin'
shrimp, **TINY?**







You must be Mikey Eyebrows and Vinnie Beardface.
Have a seat. Break bread with me.

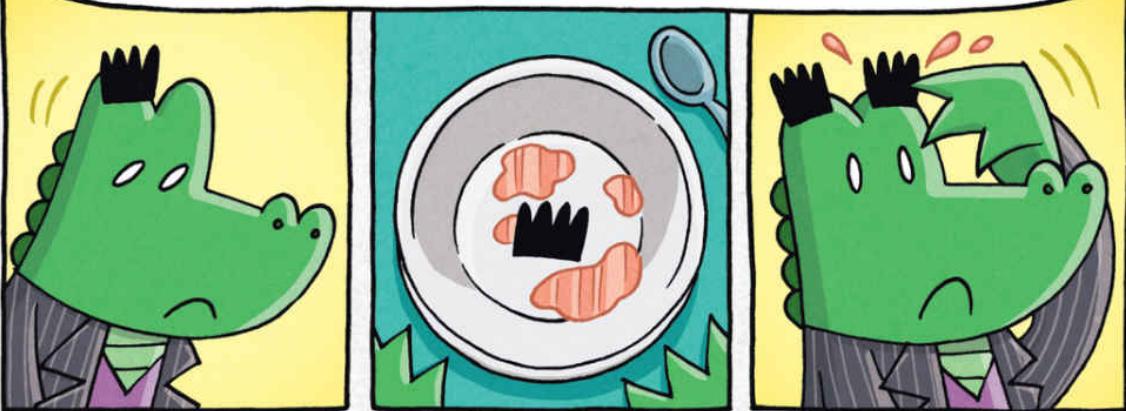




With that giant gator's gaze scaring crime out of the streets and into **Any Fin Goes**, I get a cut of **EVERY CRIME IN THE CITY!**



I had influence before, but that robot has really given a **bottom-feeder** like me a chance to rise to the top! I don't even have to get my **PINCERS** dirty.



Now Red's got **OTHER** people to do his really dirty work!



So. What's this business you're proposing? And not to sound *shellfish*, but what's in it for me?



We were lookin' to get in on the operation with the, uh...shiny rocks.

Shiny rocks?
You talkin' gems?
Diamonds?

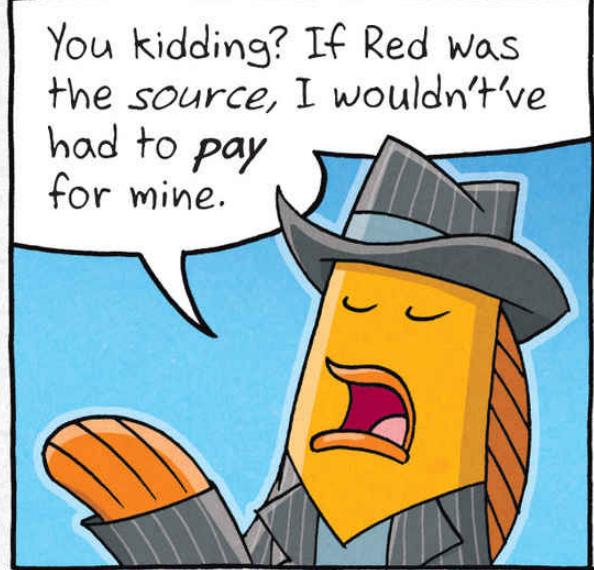


No, the rocks...at Anjie's Antiques? Word is you're her supplier. You're the...**Rock Mobster.**



So...you're **NOT** the source of the Boulder Buddies she sells?

You kidding? If Red was the source, I wouldn't've had to *pay* for mine.



Come to think of it,
I haven't seen Balboa
all day. Where did I
leave that rock?

Wait—Are you sayin' Anjie
and her Boulder Buddies
aren't on
the level?

WHAT ARE BOULDER BUDDIES? Why is this the first I'm
hearing about these things? You know how being
left out of the
loop makes me
CRABBY!

HA HA!
"Crabby."

Are you laughin' at me? Did I say
somethin' finny? Am I a clownfish
to you?

Uh, NO, sir, Mr. Red, sir.

Look, you goof-a-balls want a seat at the table, you gotta prove yourselves first. Find out who's mooching off my surf and turf and make 'em PAY UP.

NOBODY pulls off a job in this town without **RED MOBSTER** gettin' a piece of the action!



Just to be clear... You *don't* know where Anjie is?

I don't know *WHO* Anjie is! What are you, some sorta interrogator? Get outta heeeeere!



Don't worry, we're on the case!

Come on, Vinnie Brashface—
I MEAN, Beardface!



I'm beginning to think Red Mobster was just a red herring!



No, THAT'S a red herring.

You talkin' ta me?



There's something particularly NOT fishy about those two. And crooks that aren't fishy unsettle me.

Put a tail on 'em.



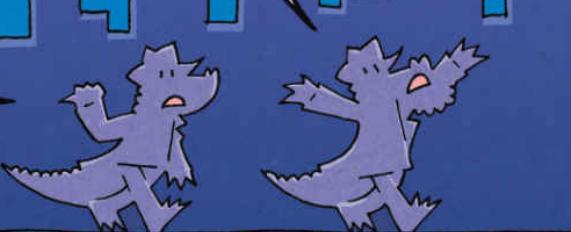
I MEAN FOLLOW THEM, YOU NINCOMPOOP!



Chapter 9

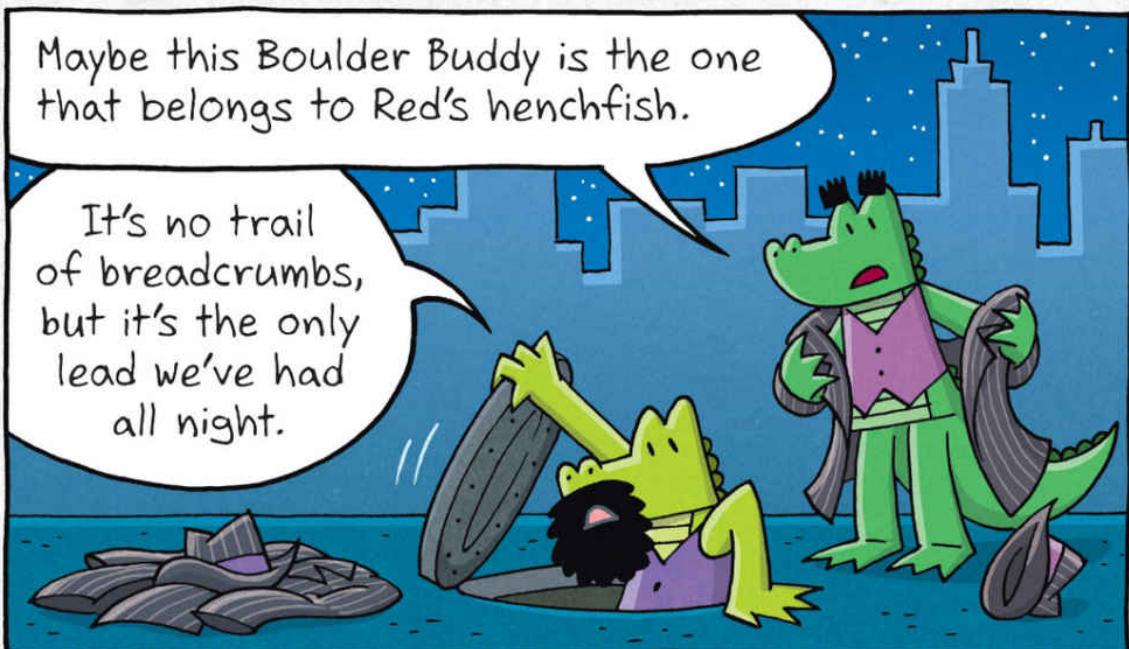
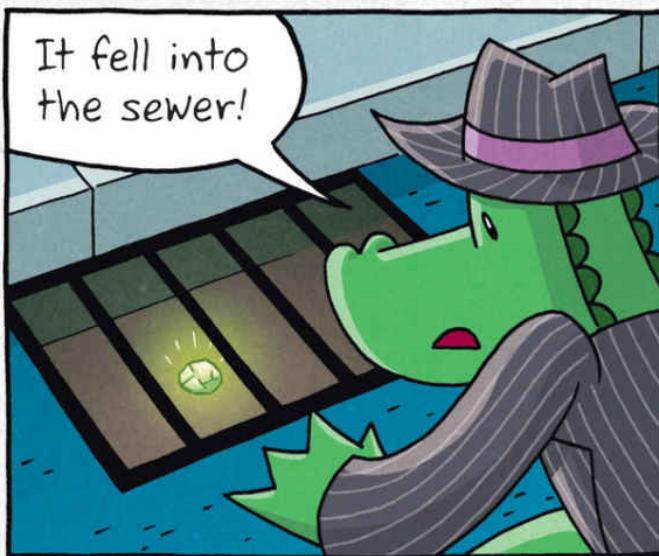
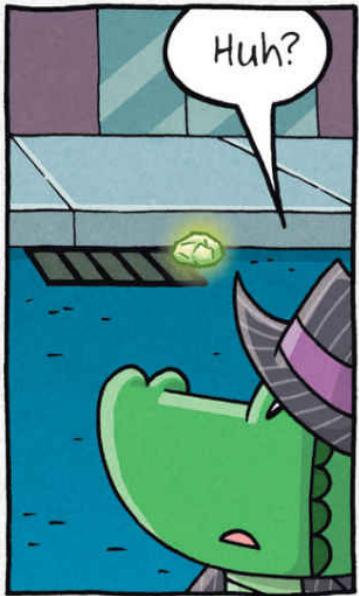


Our InvestiQuarters looming over the skyline has only given the *ILLUSION* of ridding the city of crime, Mango. Crime never went away—it's just been hiding in MegaRoboBrash's *shadow*!

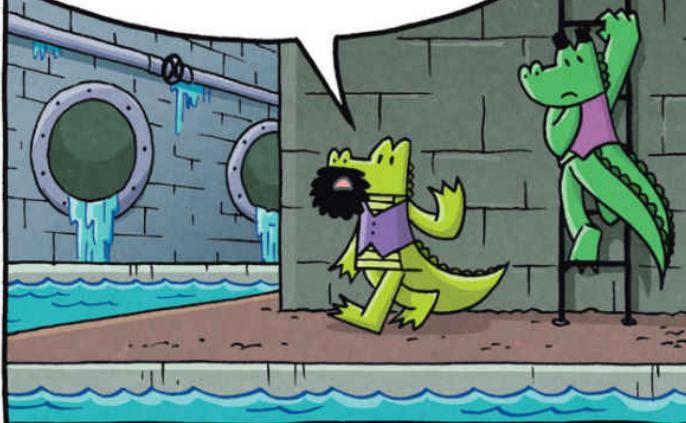


Actually, it's been hiding inside that shady nightclub.





The grate it fell down
should be right around
this corner.



There's the grate.



Huh? The rock
should be right here.

Hang on... Where's
that light coming
from?

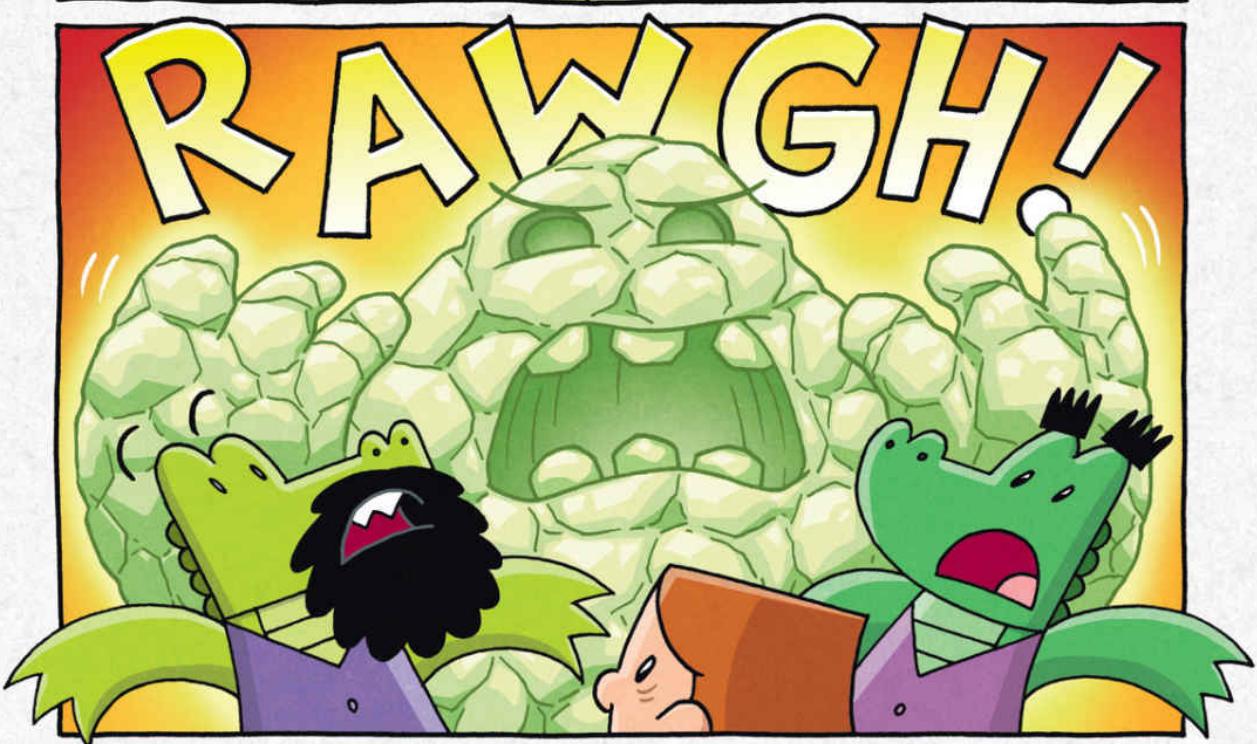


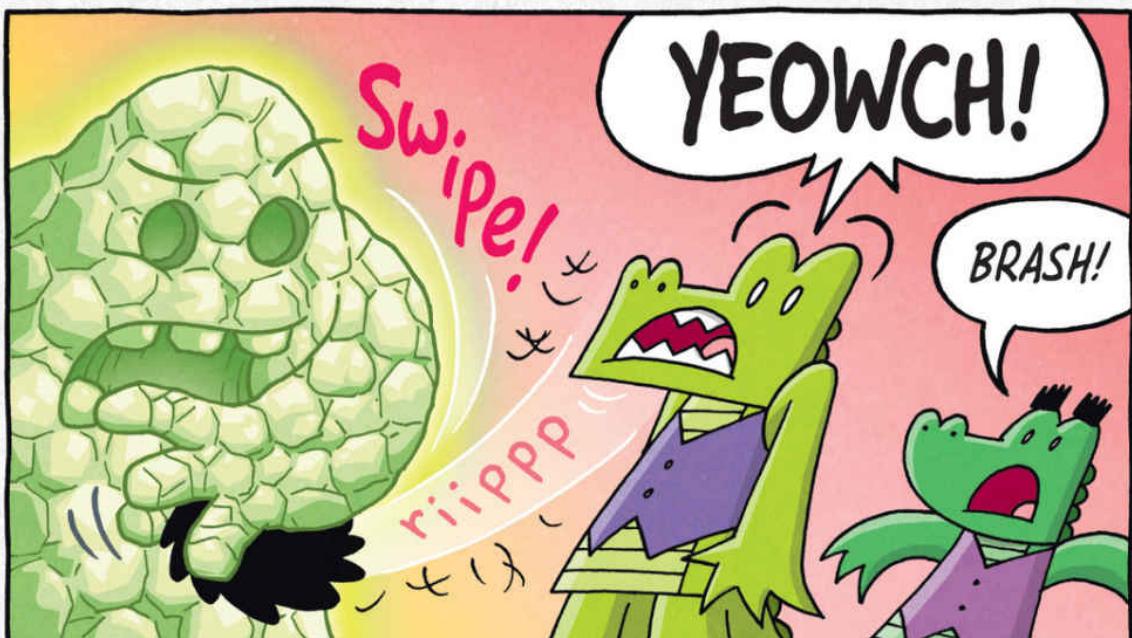
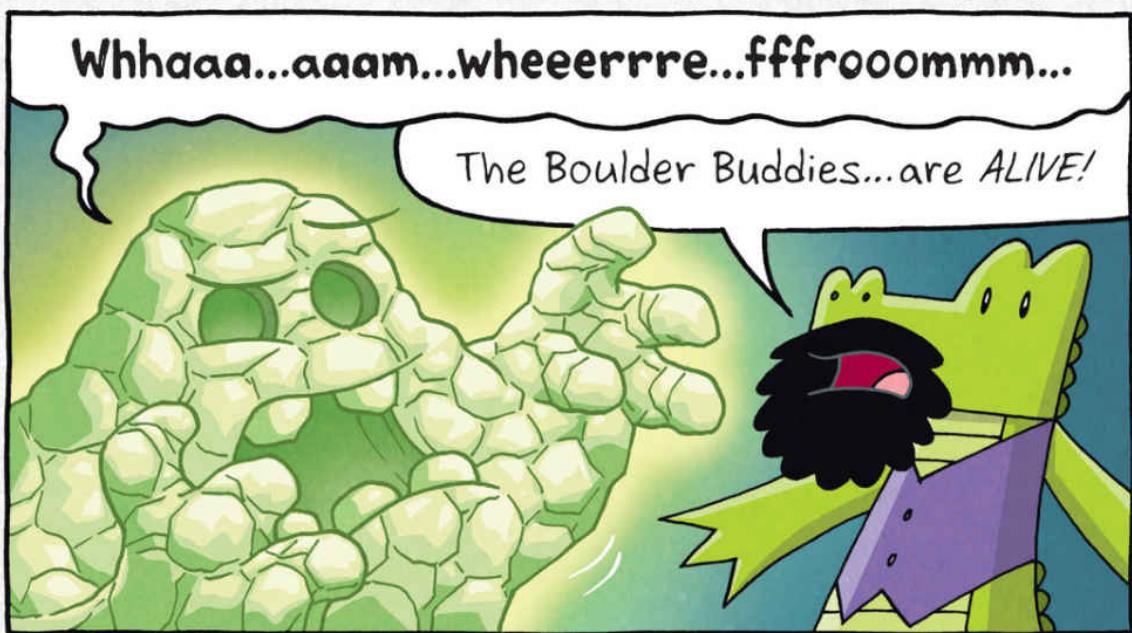
Well, it's coming from the end of the tunnel, Brash.

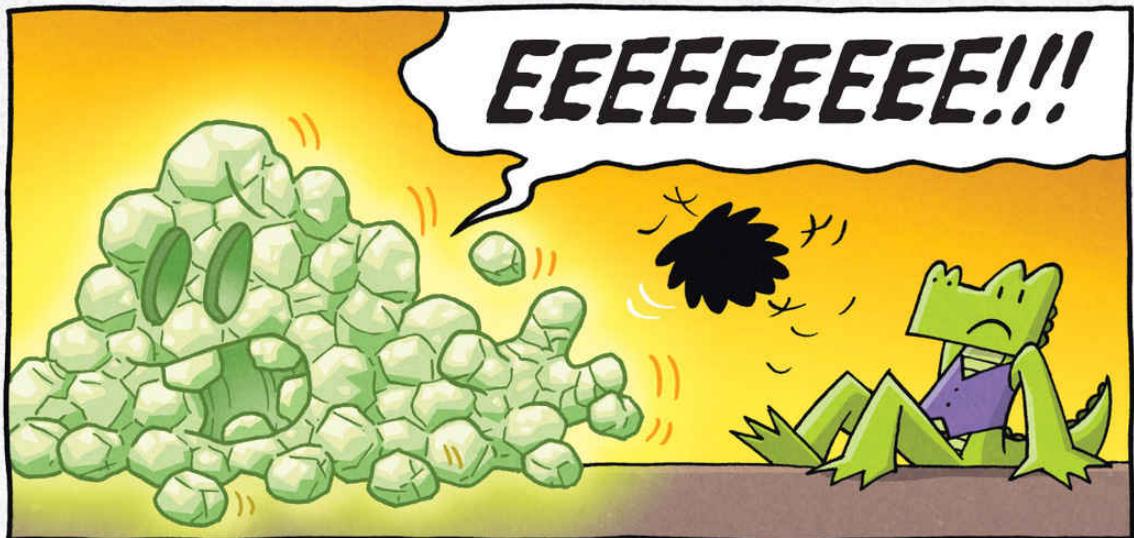
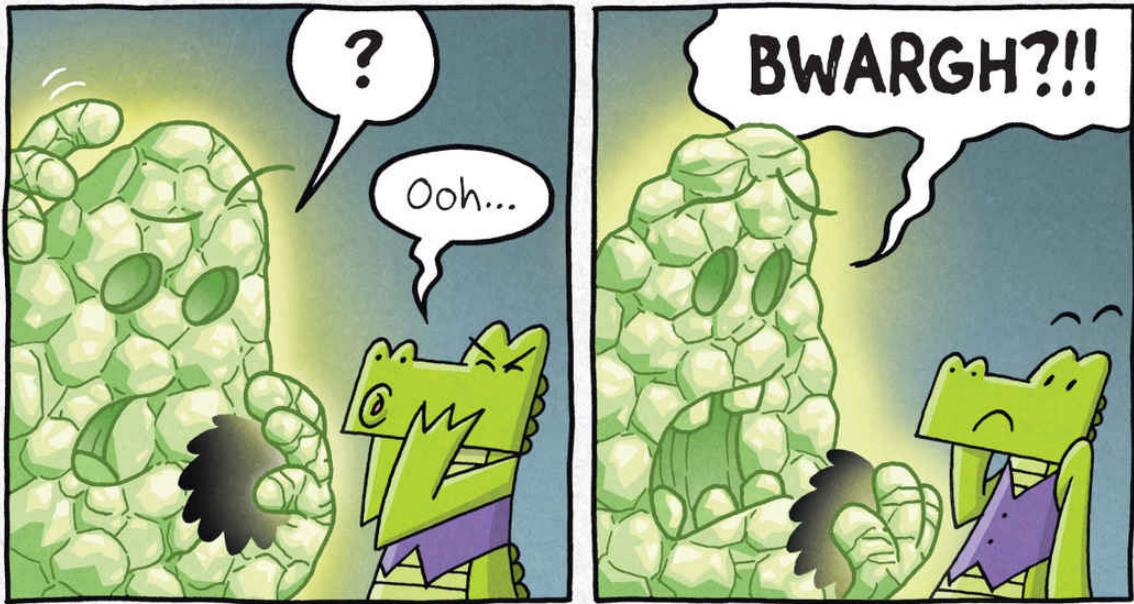


No, I mean what's **MAKING** the light, Mango! Come on!

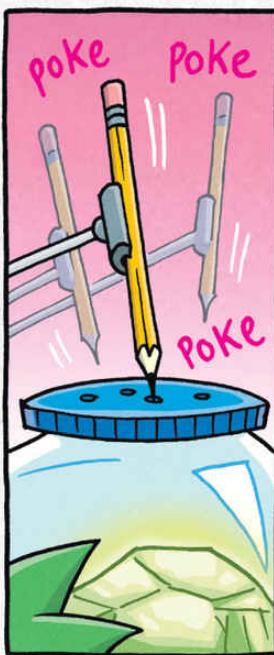
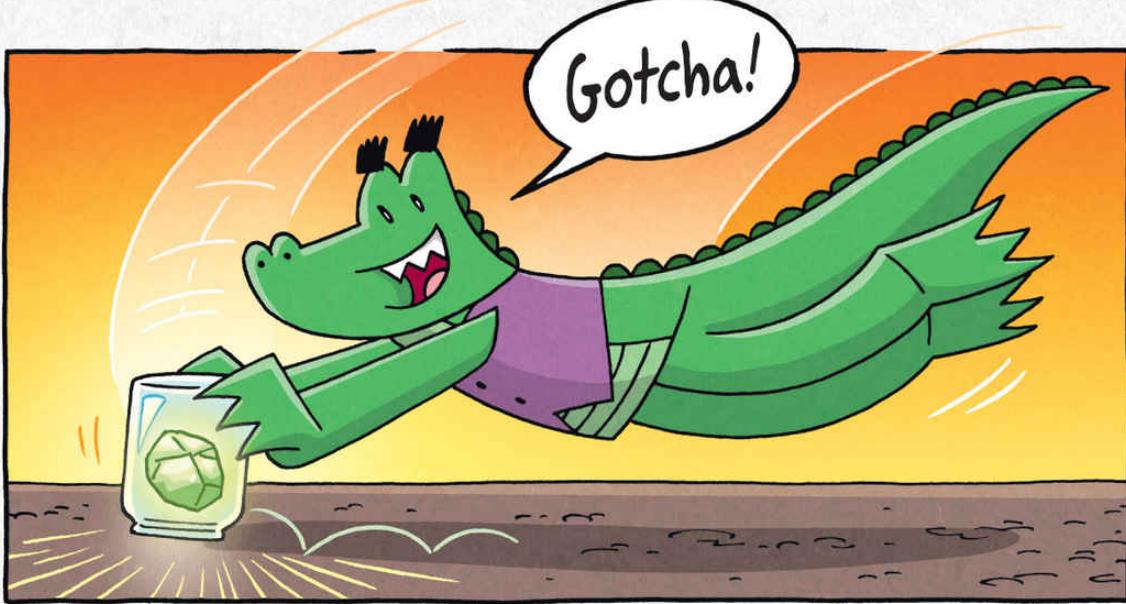


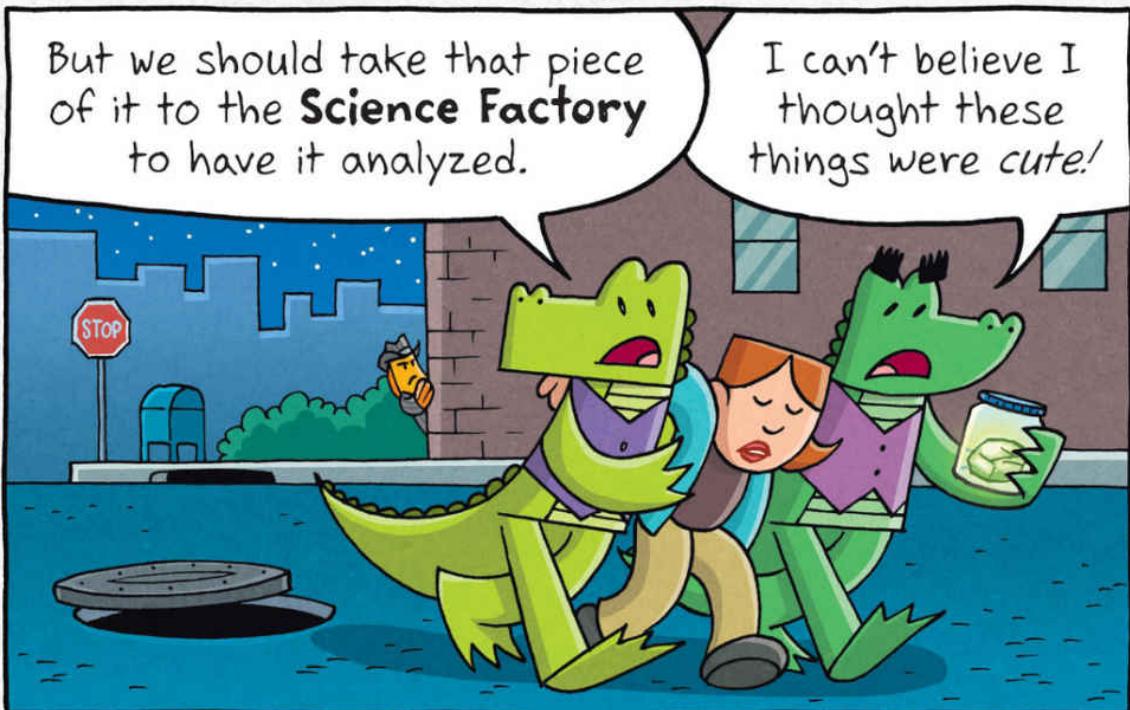












Vinnie Beardface
ain't no mobster...



...he's the **InvestiGator!**

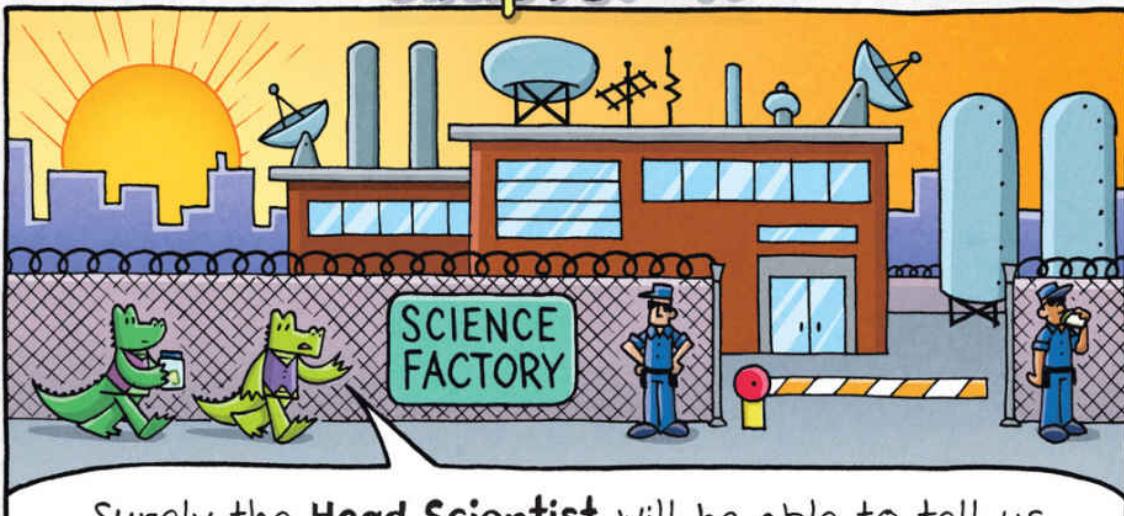


I better
tell the
boss!

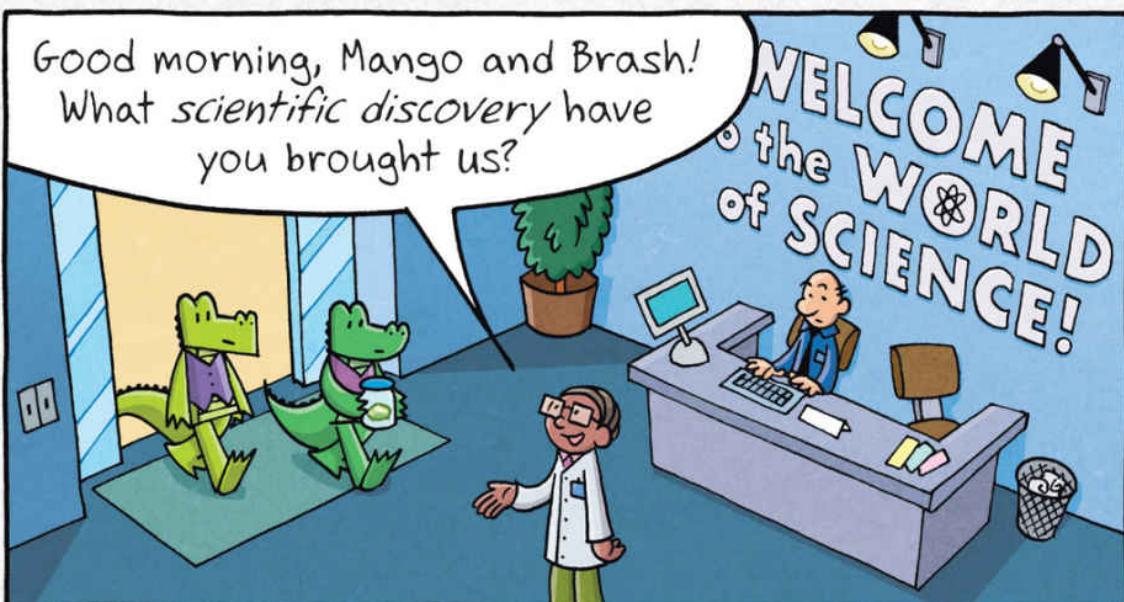


In...vest...GATOR...

Chapter 10

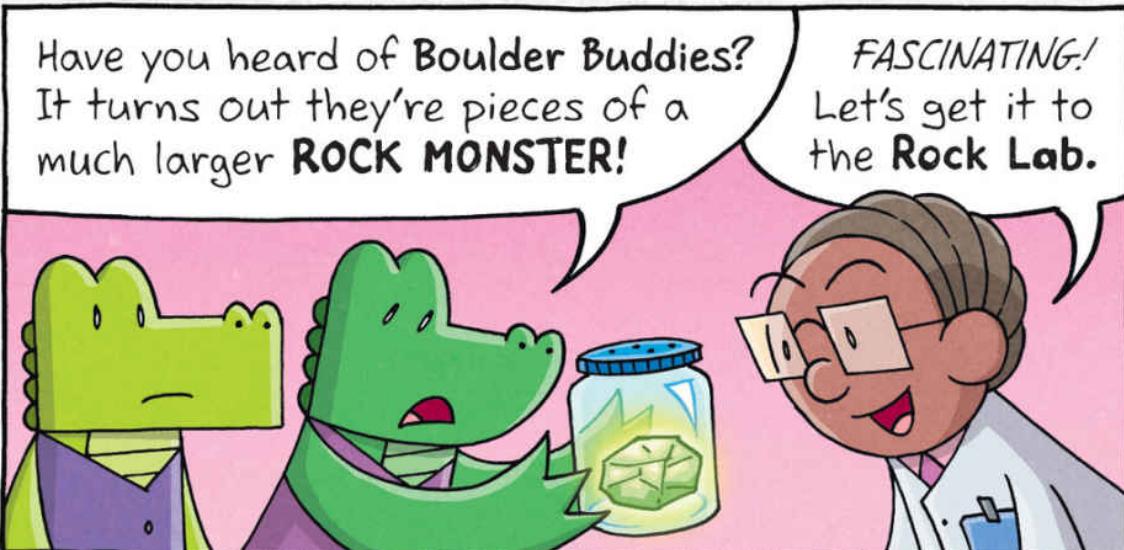


Surely the **Head Scientist** will be able to tell us what this rock **ACTUALLY IS** and **WHERE** it came from.

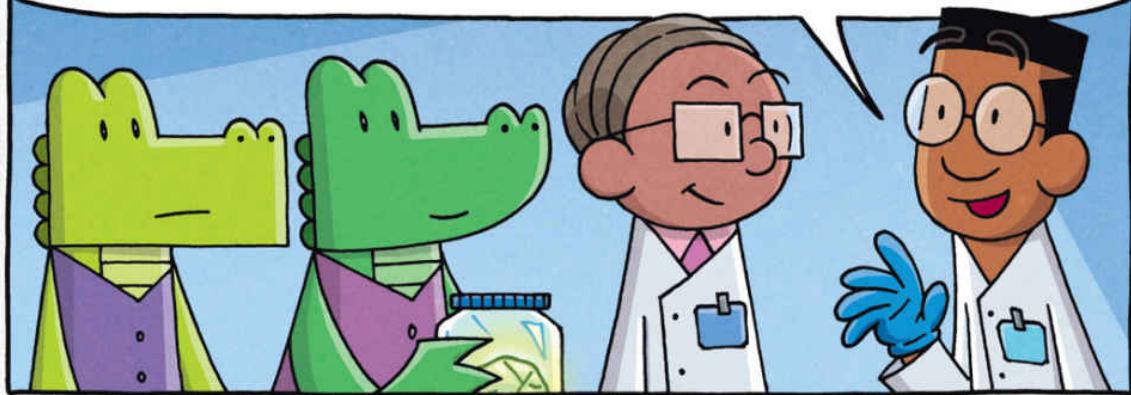


Good morning, Mango and Brash!
What scientific discovery have
you brought us?

FASCINATING!
Let's get it to
the **Rock Lab**.



Hi, I'm Dr. Richter. I'm the resident **GEOLOGIST**, or **rock doctor**, so don't take my expertise for granite!



Rock doctor? HA! They should call you the **ROCKTOR!**

I WISH. That's what we call the **rock MUSIC** doctor.

I've got a PhD in rock **AND** roll!

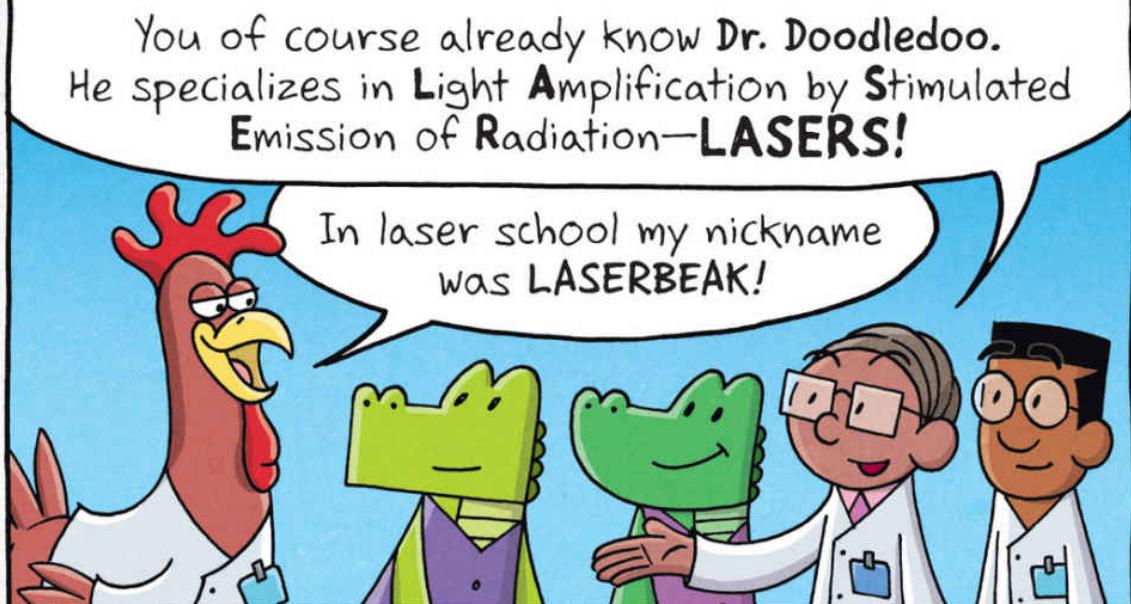
YEEAH!!!

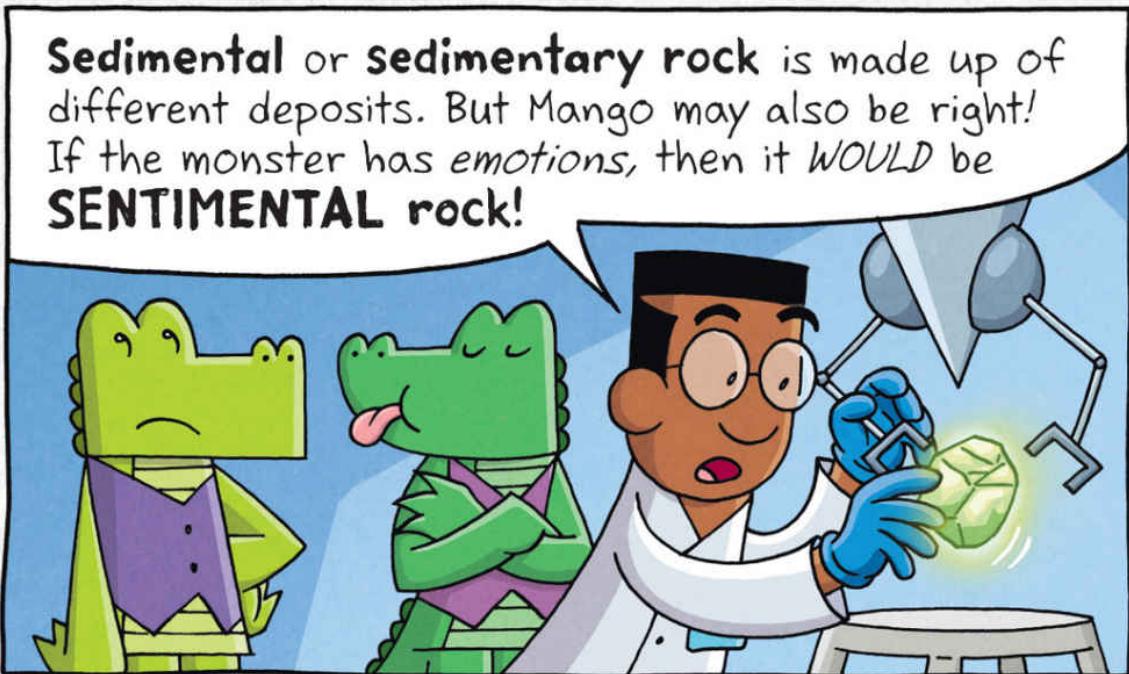
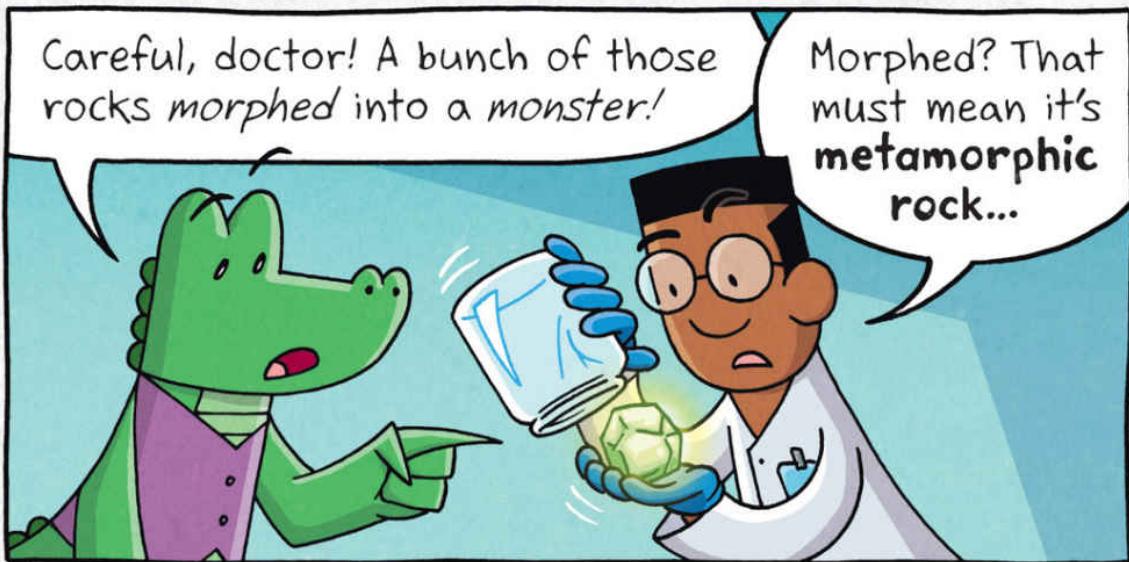
TWANG!



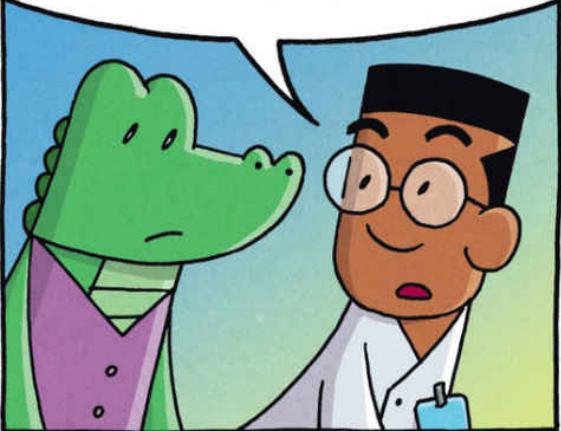
You of course already know Dr. Doodledoo. He specializes in **Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation—LASERS!**

In laser school my nickname was **LASERBEAK!**

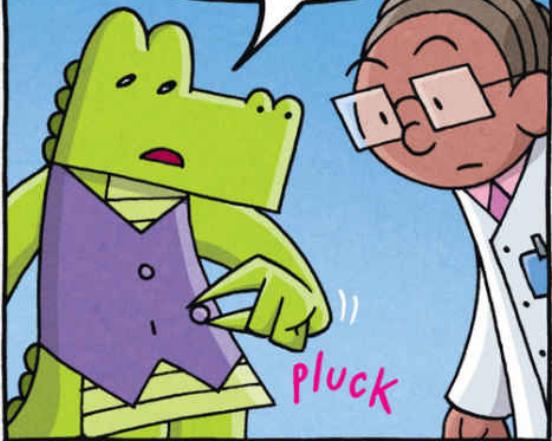




It might take a while to get to the **rock bottom** of this, Gators.



Here, Doc. Take this V.E.S.T. button.



When you need to contact us, just press it.

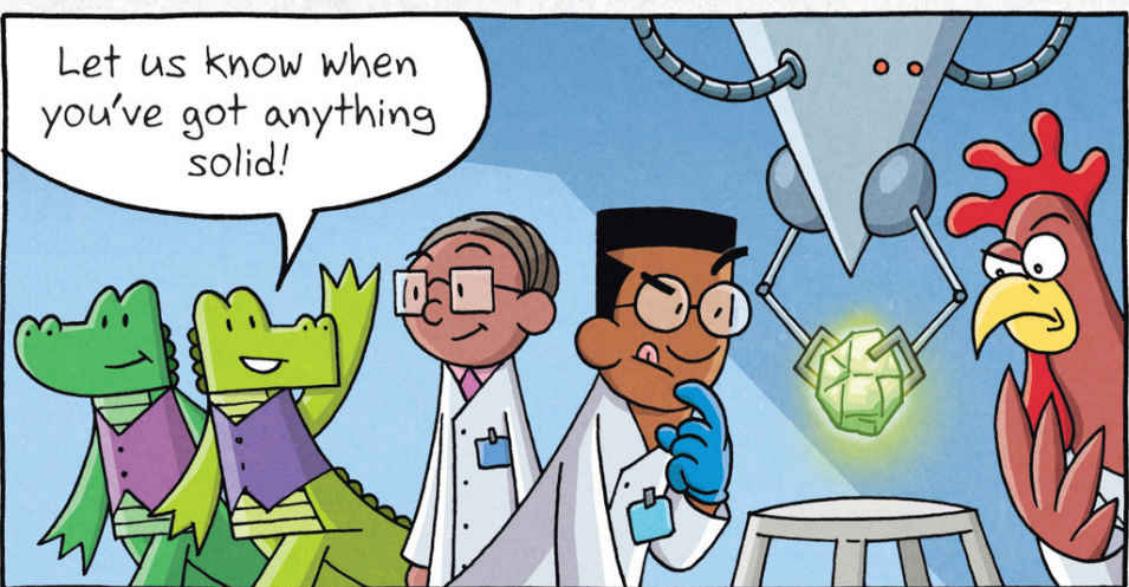


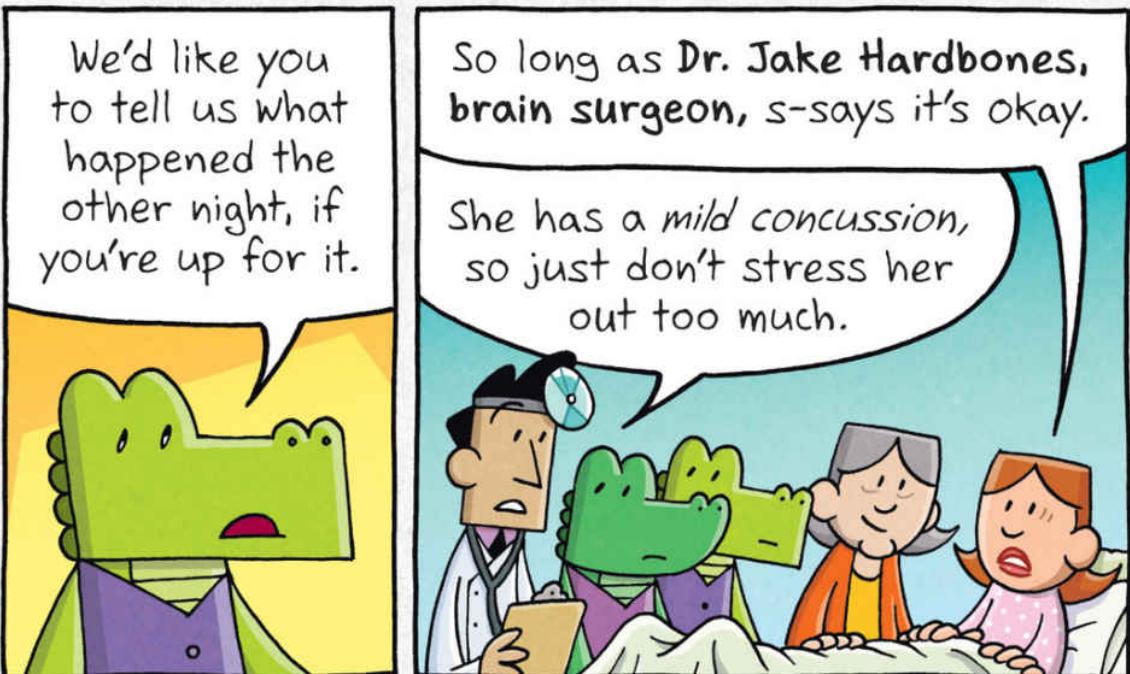
NEAT!

That is Very Exciting Spy Technology!



Let us know when you've got anything solid!







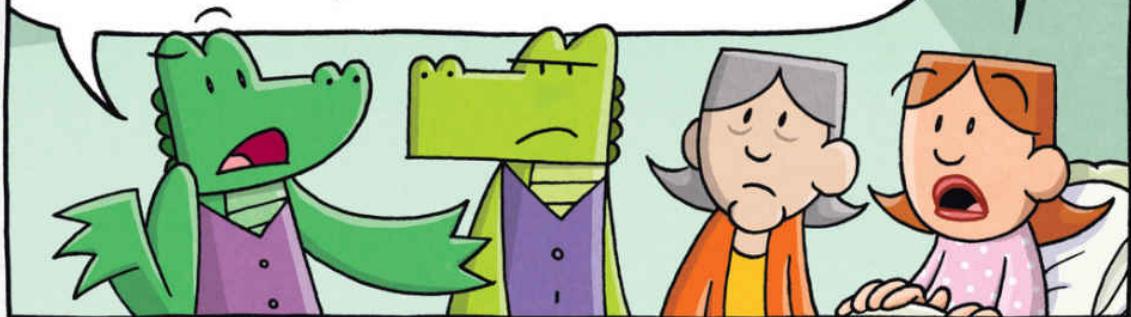
I was on the phone with my mom when I was startled b-by this—

ROCK MONSTER!



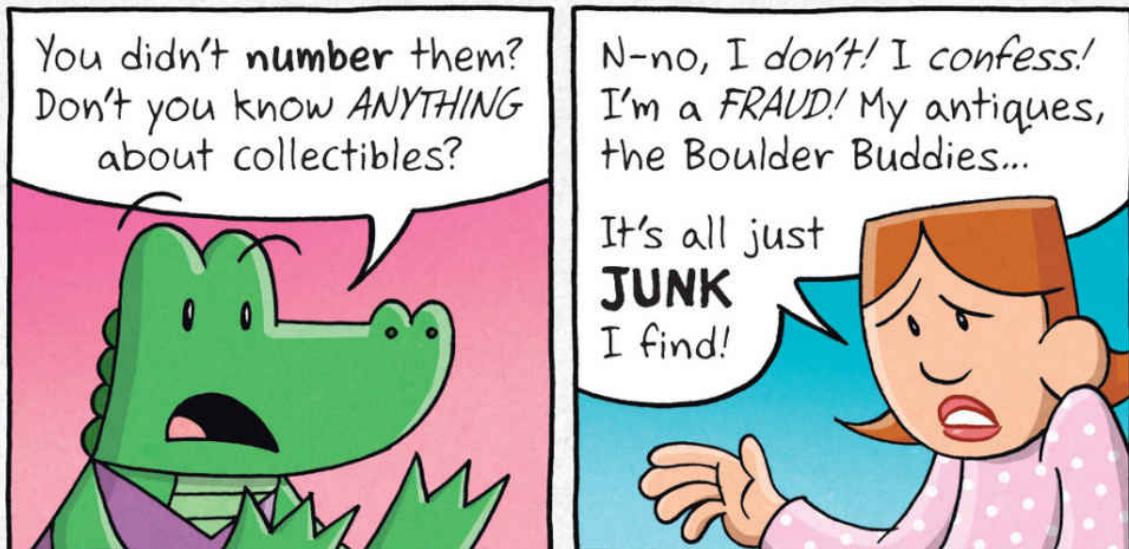
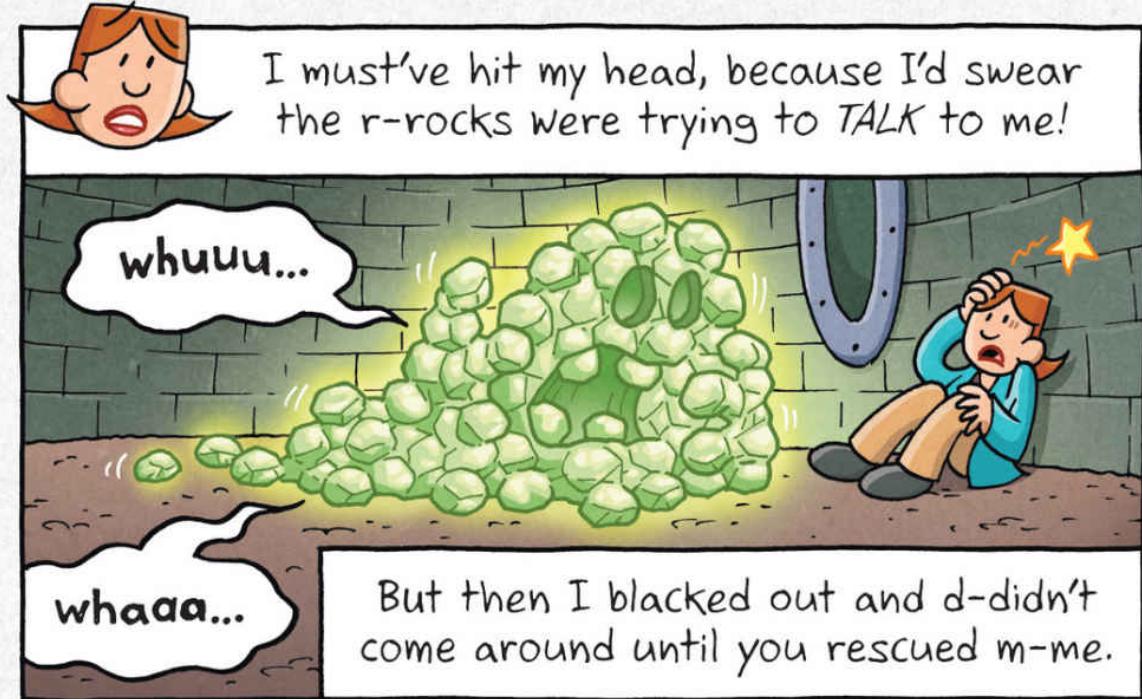
My nose was just stuffy from allergies! HONEST! I d-don't know anything about any **mobsters**!

Just making sure! We went on a *wild* goose chase. And by *GOOSE*, I mean *LOBSTER*!



The **Boulder Buddies** had come back to the store...and come to life! They grabbed me and c-carried me off into the sewer!





ANJIE! You said they were ethically sourced!

What? I'm basically recycling. Recycling is ethical.

Eh, she got ya there.

Ya put a high price tag on something worthless and suddenly everyone thinks it's valuable!

So when I found these **BIG, GLOWING BOULDERS**, I knew people would pay out the *wazoo* for 'em!



I figured I'd make more money if I cut them into smaller pieces and gave 'em a catchy name.

I was gonna go smaller and call them **Pebble Pals**, but chiseling was just SO much work, and I'm all about shortcuts.

I n-never expected **Boulder Buddies** would be so popular. But I expected even less that they'd come back to get **REVENGE** for being **CHOPPED TO B-BITS!**

Anjie! SHH... You're safe now.



Anjie, tell us where!
WHERE did you find
them...?!

The same place I find all my
merchandise... But, NO! NO!
I won't go back there!
The horror! THE HORROR!!!



Enough! No more questions. Anjie needs to rest!

Come, Gators.

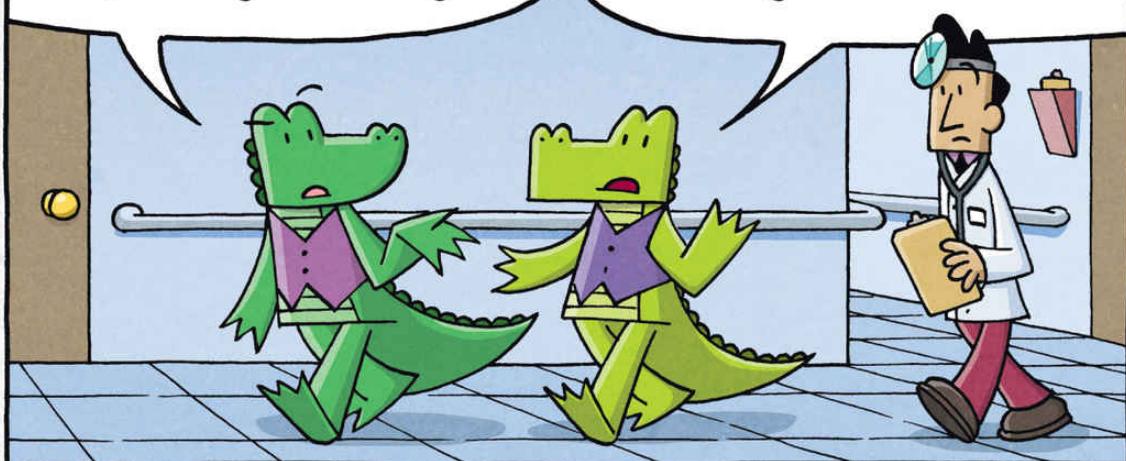


We can't sit around and wait to be able to question Anjie again. We gotta keep **INVESTIGATORING!**

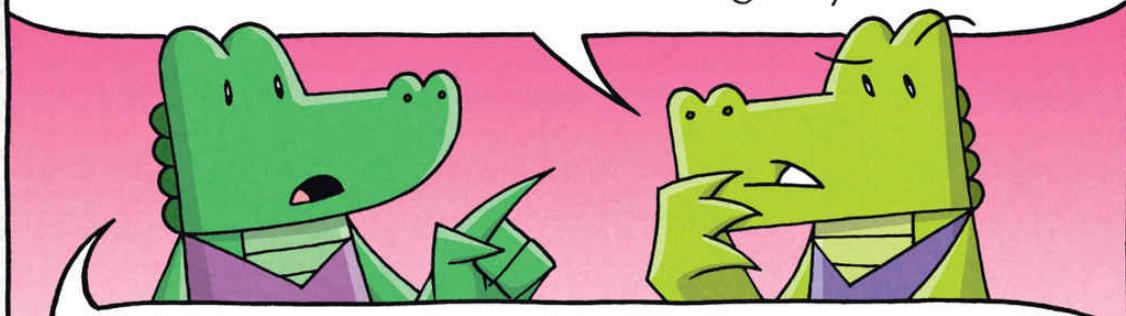


Do you really think the rock monster abducted Anjie to get revenge?

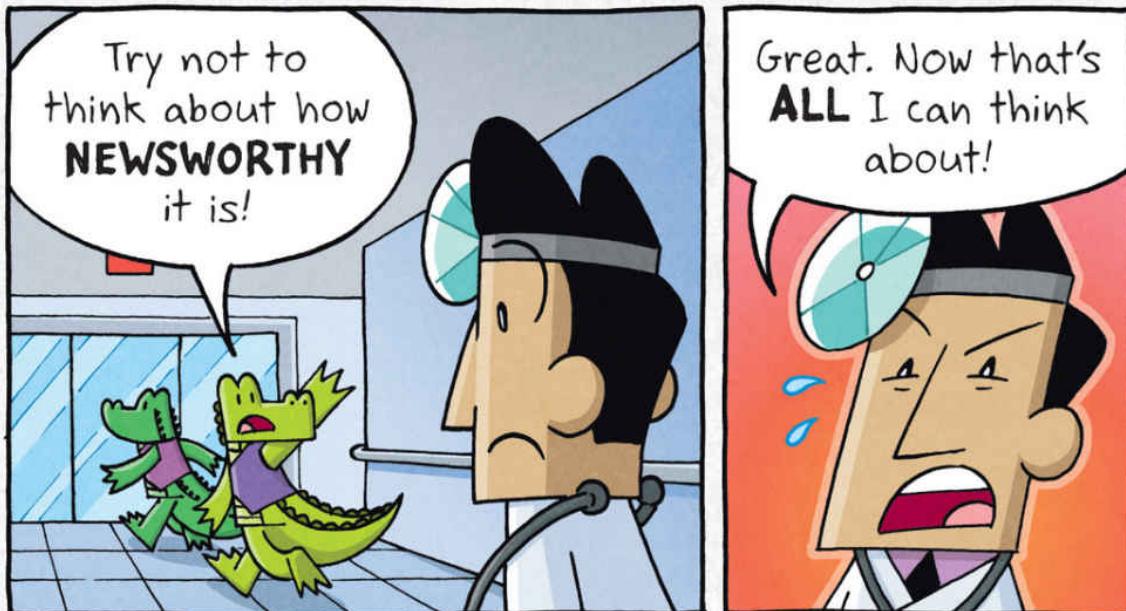
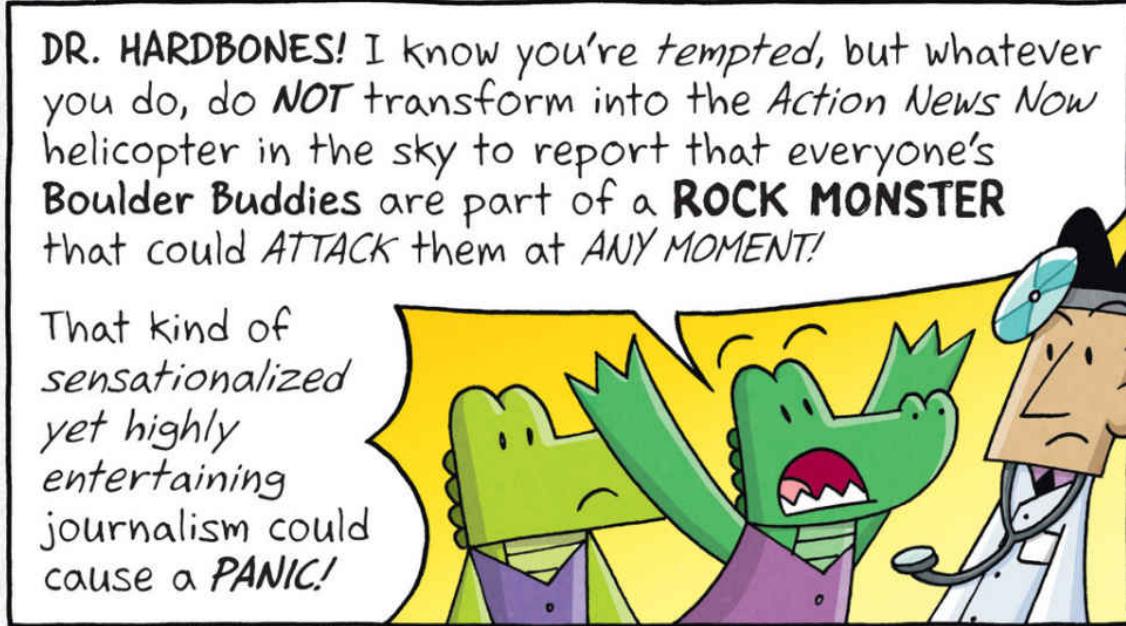
I have the impression it took Anjie because it's looking for answers.



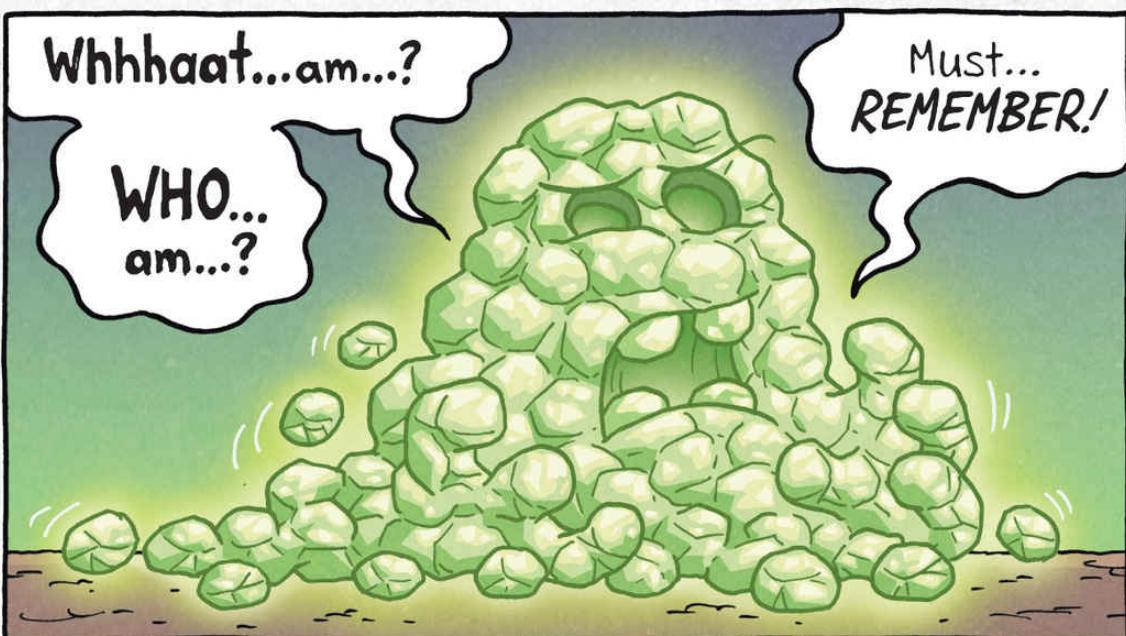
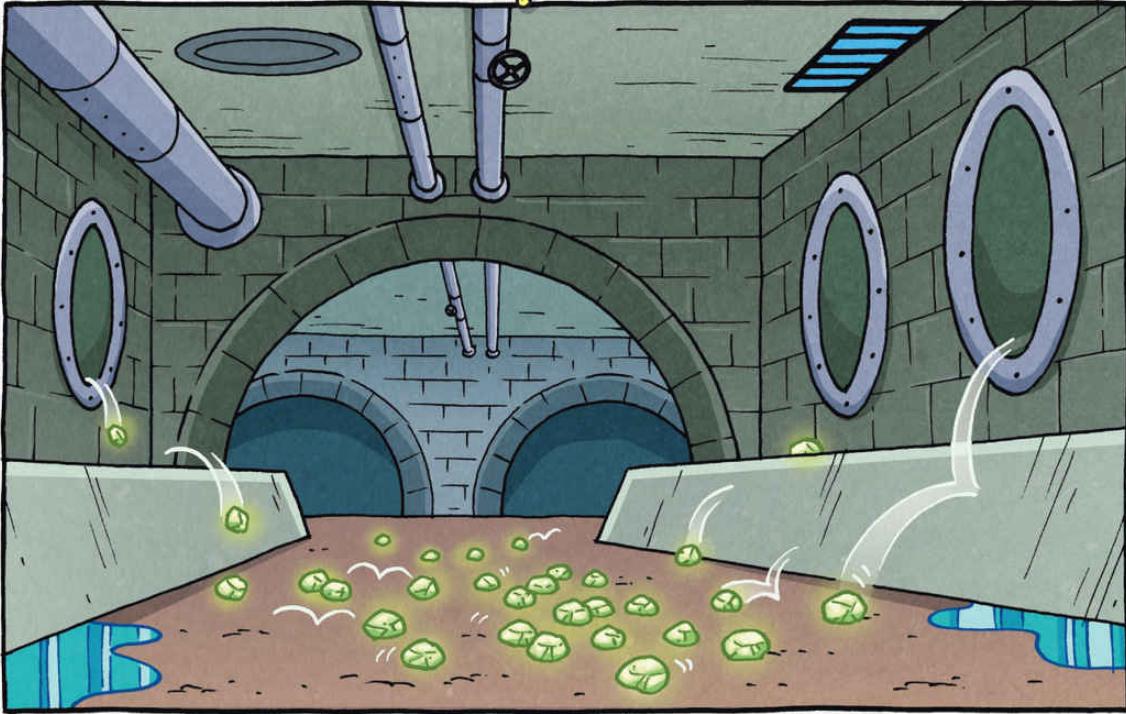
We're short on answers ourselves. We still have no clue *WHERE* the Boulder Buddies originally came from.

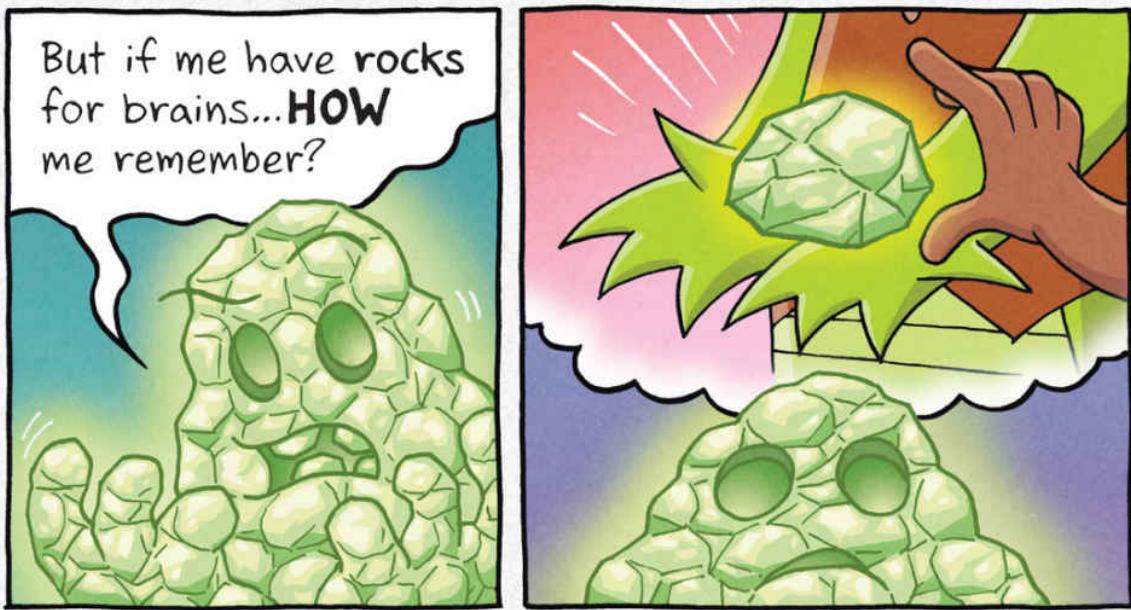


But since we *DO* know we're looking for a rock **MONSTER** instead of a rock **mobster**, maybe we'll notice some clues we missed earlier at Anjie's store.



Chapter 11







So we...returned to Anjie...

And find
more **ME**...

Anjie's
Antiques

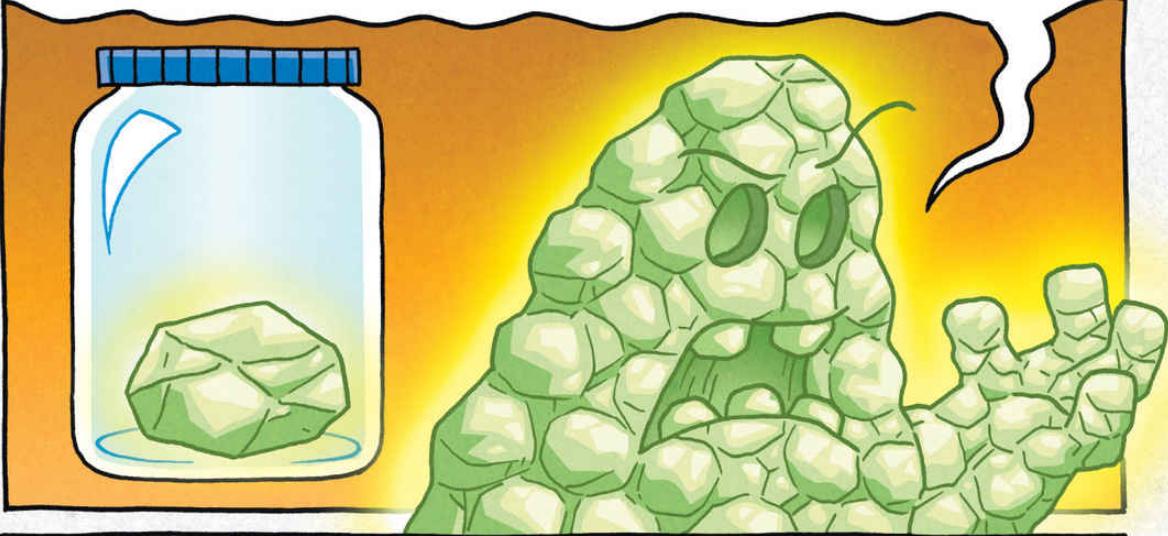
Me got bigger...and TOOK Anjie! For **answers!**

But then **THEY**
showed up!

In-in-in...**TRUDERS!**

BRASH!

Came...and TOOK...piece of me! Now, me in pickle...



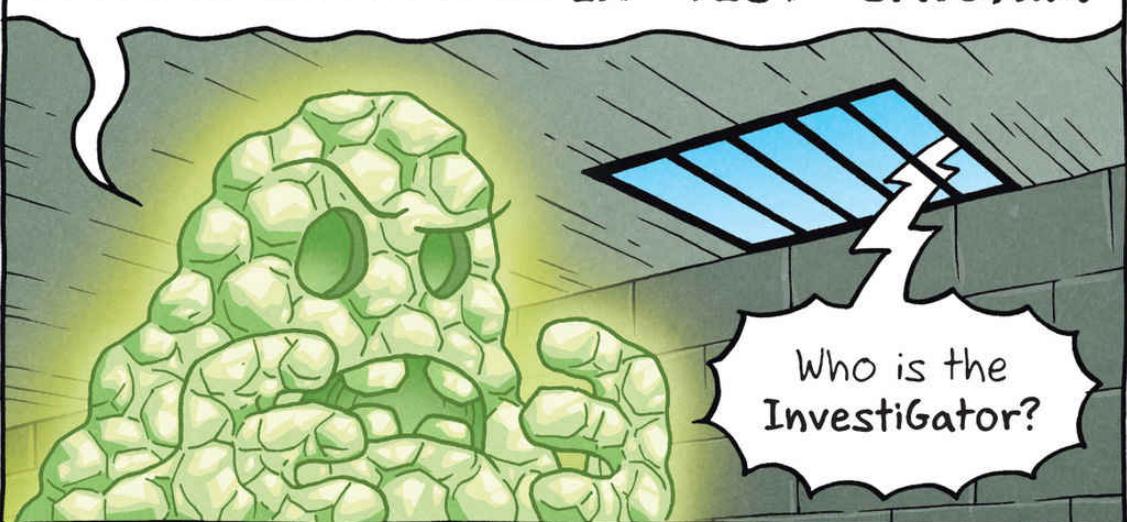
This...Buh-Buh-
BRAAASSSHHH...

Seems familiar...
Where...seen...?



Need ANSWERS! Who is the **IN-VEST-GATOR...?**

Who is the
InvestiGator?

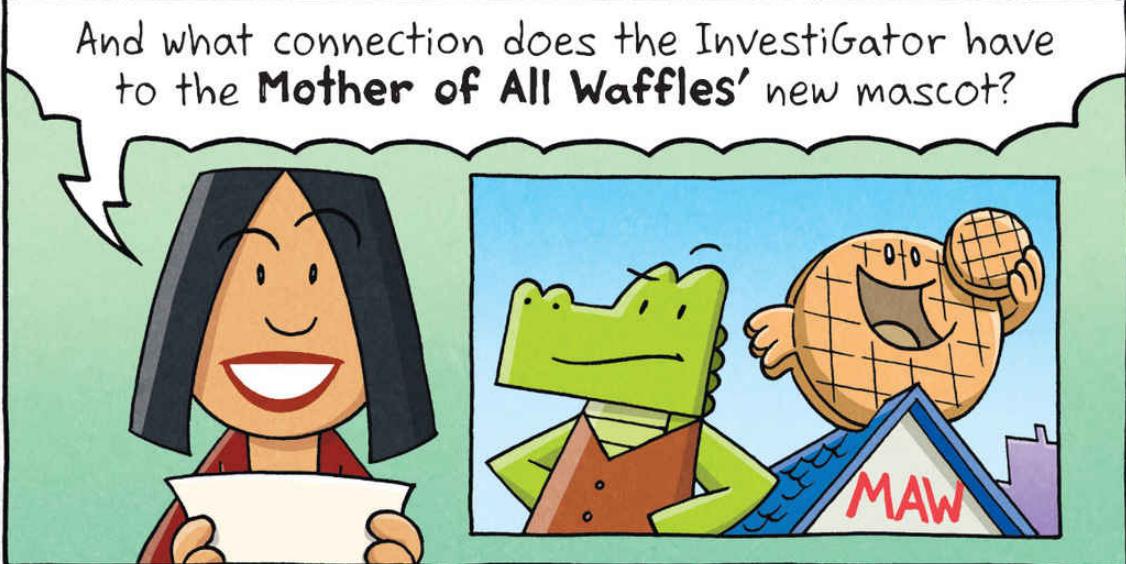




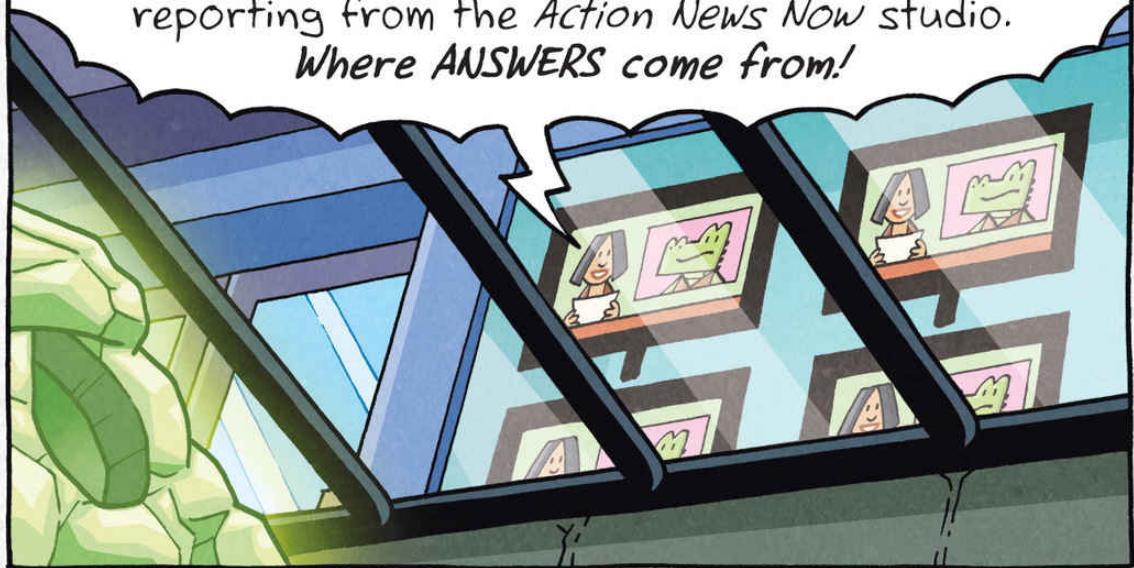
Just who is the **reptile** behind the **robot**?
How long has he been protecting the city? Is he
investigating the missing Boulder Buddies?



And what connection does the **InvestiGator** have
to the **Mother of All Waffles'** new mascot?

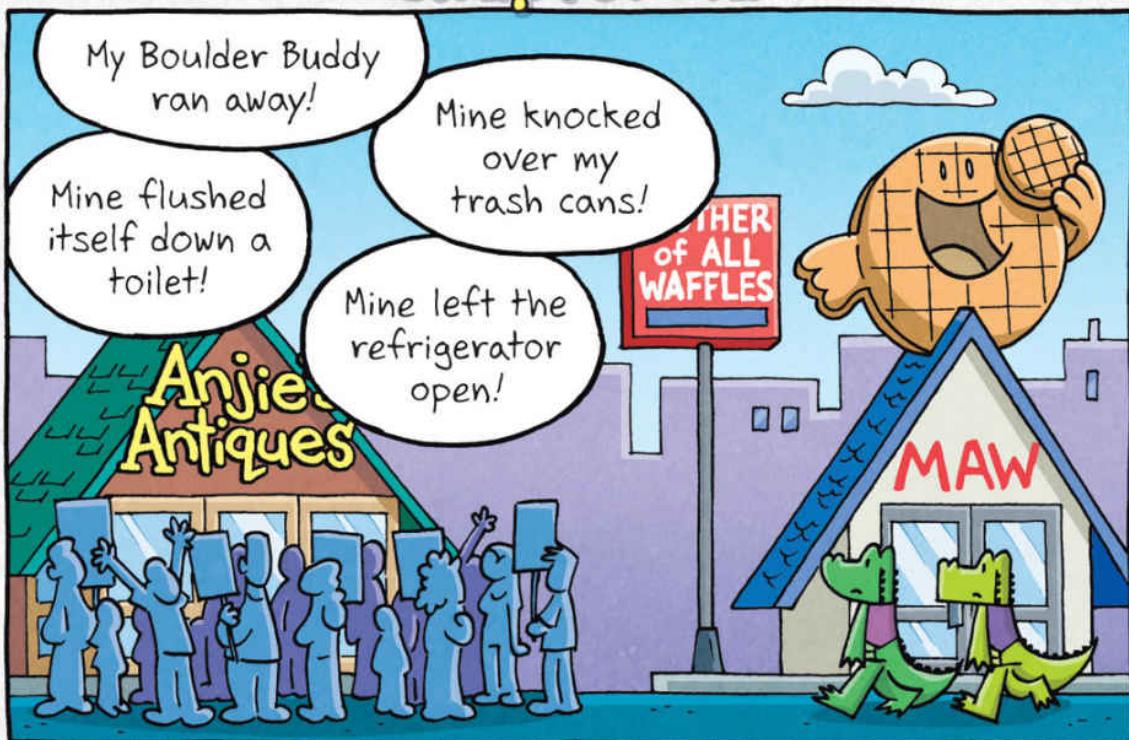


For the answers to these questions and more,
watch my exclusive exposé on the Investigator
TONIGHT at 8 p.m.! Until then, I'm Cici Boringstories,
reporting from the Action News Now studio.
Where ANSWERS come from!



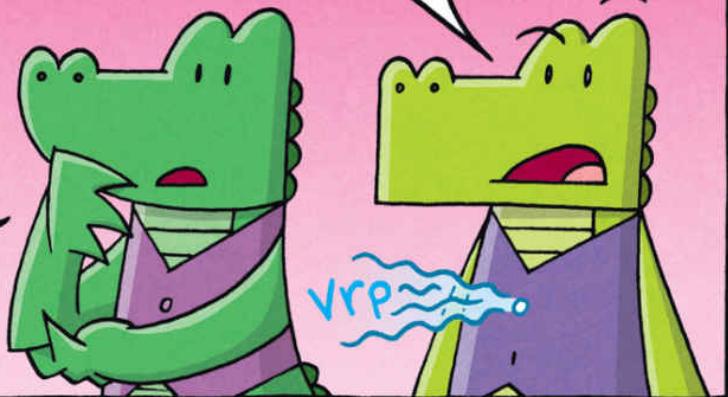


Chapter 12



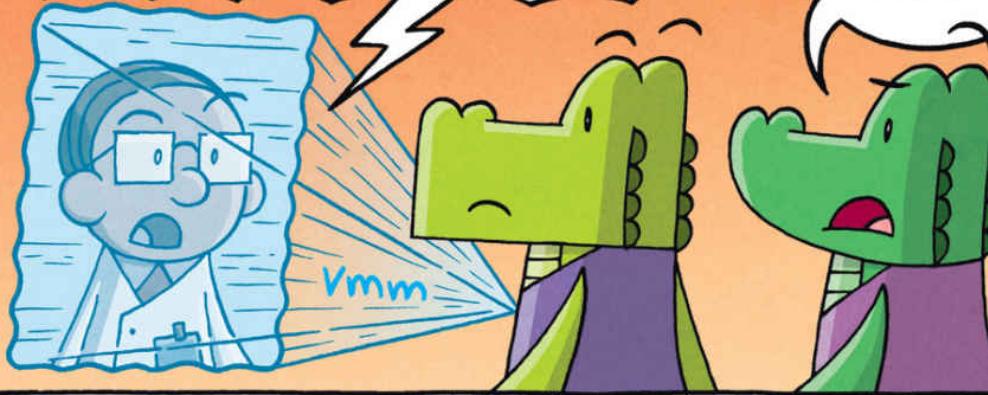
Mango, NO ONE will want Boulder Buddies once they learn they're pieces of a **ROCK MONSTER!**

Good point.
I wonder what Anjie's refund policy is.



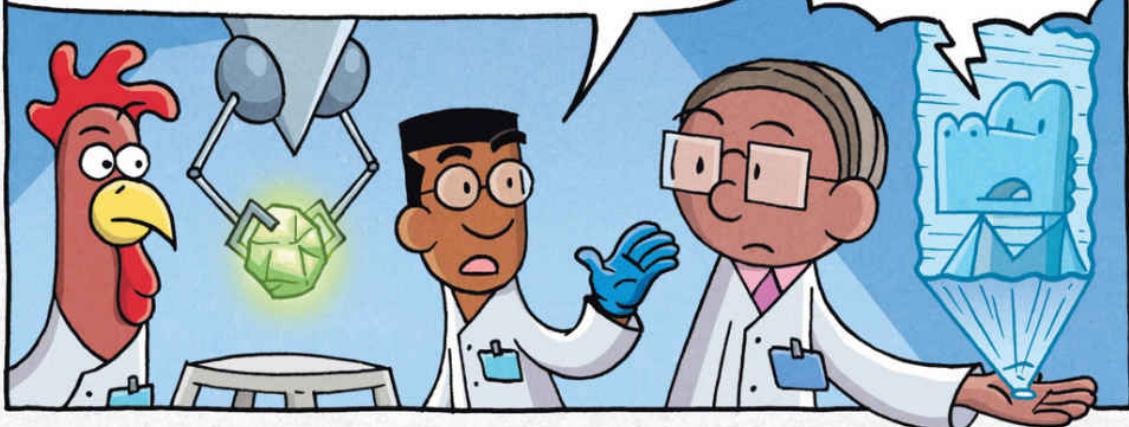
Gators! We've analyzed that rock sample and have an update. It's not natural rock—it's **CONCRETE!**

Concrete?
What makes it GLOW?

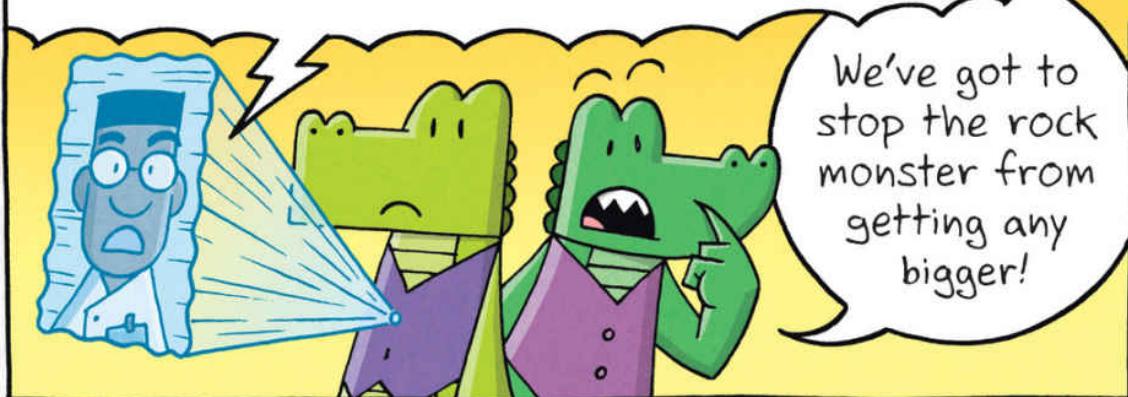


Concrete is porous, which means it can absorb liquid. In this case, it's soaked up **NUCLEAR WASTE!**

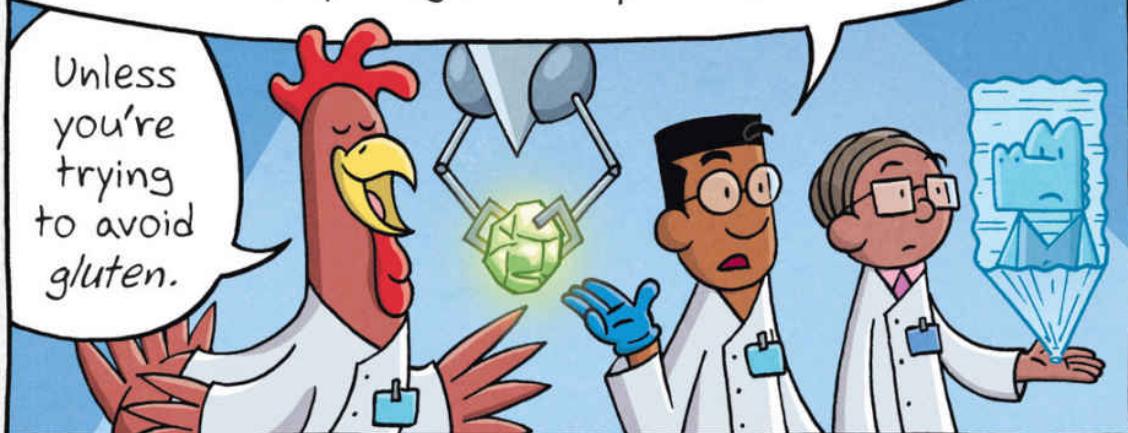
NUCLEAR WASTE?! Is it dangerous?!



The concrete acts as a **buffer**, so in "rock" form it's pretty harmless. But if you put enough of these Boulder Buddies together, all the **radiation** in them could be **HOTTER THAN THE SUN!**



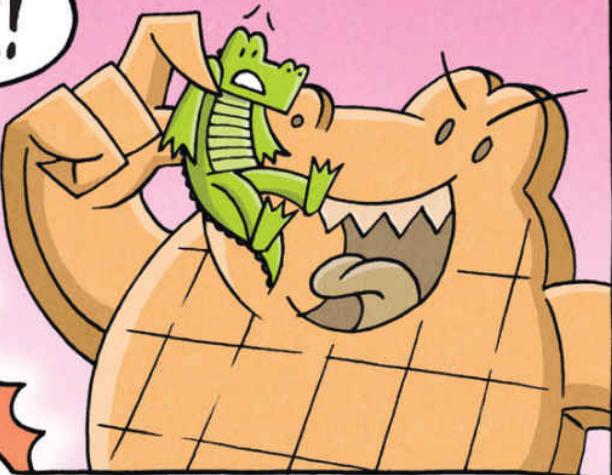
We also found trace elements of **flour**, **yeast**, and **baking soda**. But those ingredients aren't anything to worry about.



Those ingredients... can also be found... in a **CRACKER...**



...A WAFFLEDILE!



After all this time, and all his different forms, **Daryl** lives once more...*AGAIN*...for another chance at *revenge*!

♪GASP! I covered Waffledile in **CONCRETE**! And then
MegaRoboBrash crushed him to bits! The **Boulder
Buddies** are Waffledile's **CRUMBLED REMAINS!!!**



Anjie's store is right next to the **MAW**. She must have **FOUND** the chunks of Waffledile here.

No, Anjie said she found them where she finds **ALL** her junk...

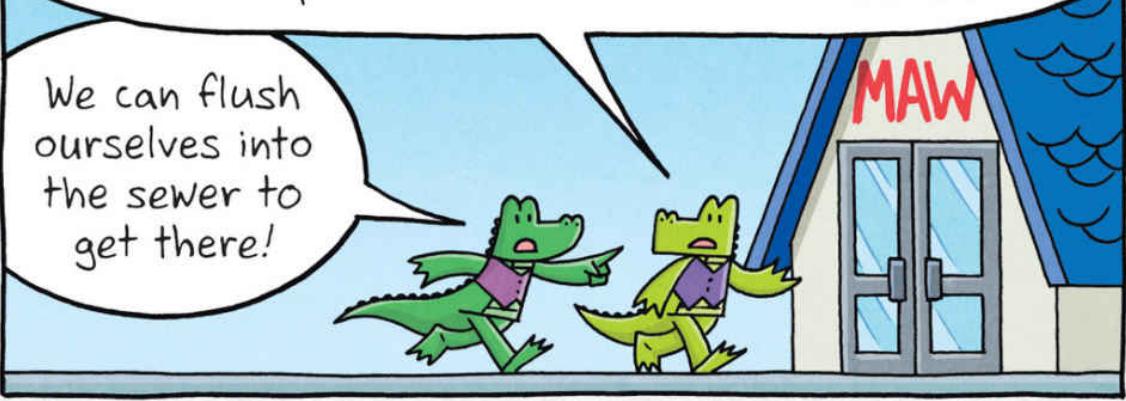


WAIT! THAT'S IT! When Anjie said **JUNK**, she meant it! Waffledile's remains were taken to the **CITY DUMP!** Anjie doesn't sell **ANTIQUES**—she sells **GARBAGE!**



That explains why her store *smells!*

Anjie said she'd run out of Boulder Buddies and was going to get more... That means there may still be pieces of Waffledile at the **DUMP!**



We can flush ourselves into the sewer to get there!

Welcome to the MAW. Would you like some **FRUGGETS**? They're our new French toast-style chicken nuggets.



No, thanks! We gotta get to the **DUMP!**

Okay, EW. And the bathroom is for customers only.



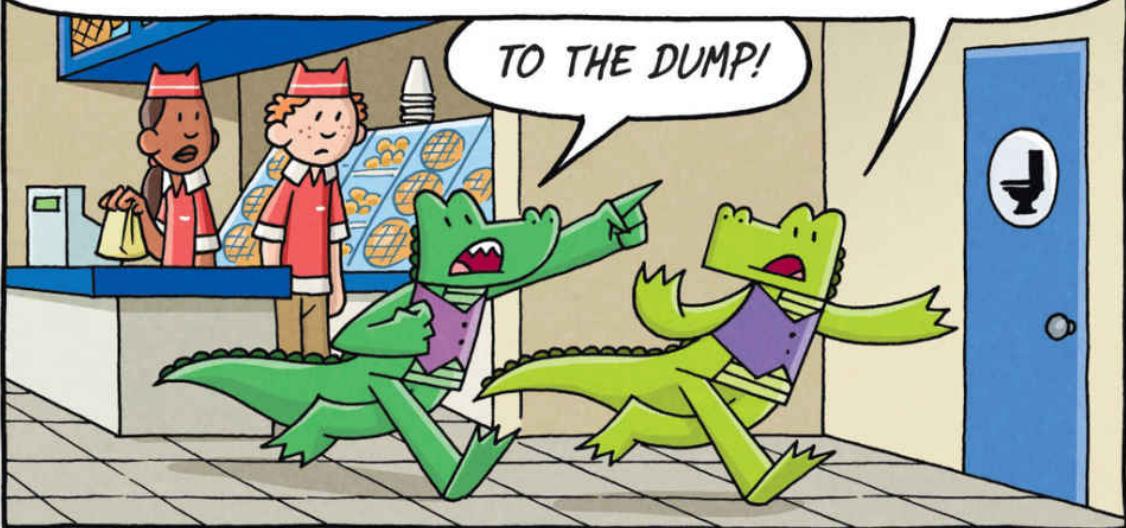
Just give me a small anything!

We're out of small anythings. Is medium okay?



We can't let **CRACKERDILE**, or whatever he's going to call himself this time, return to his villainous ways!

TO THE DUMP!

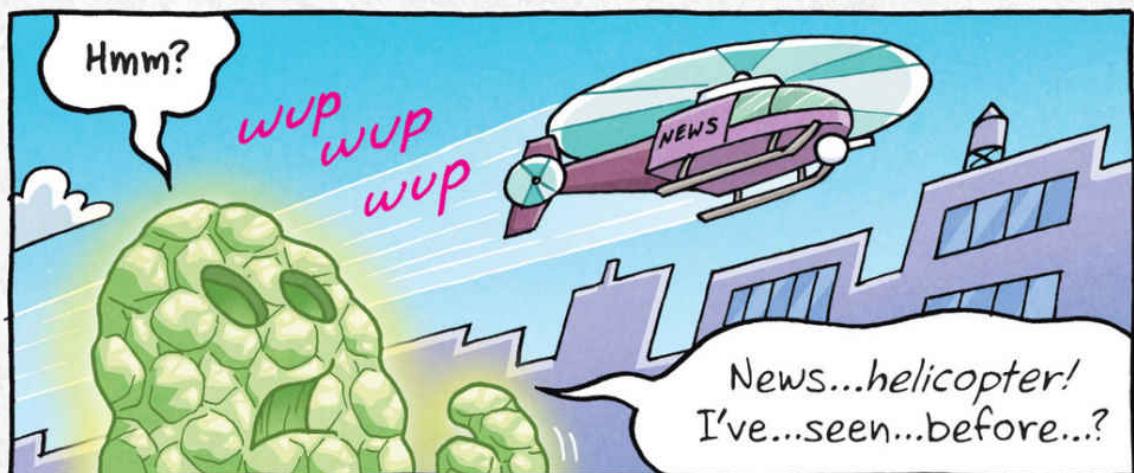
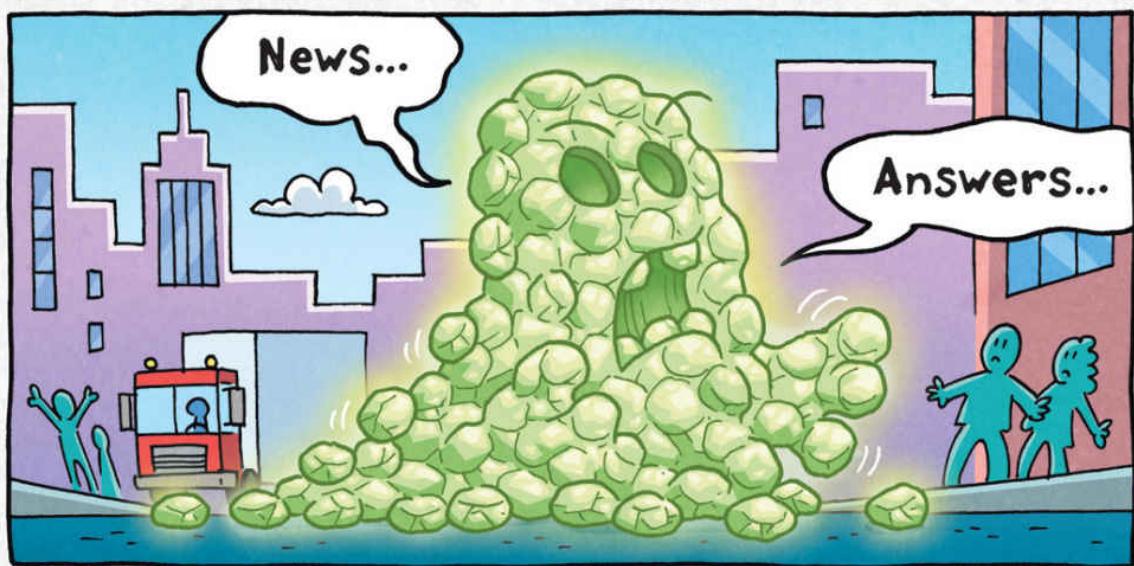


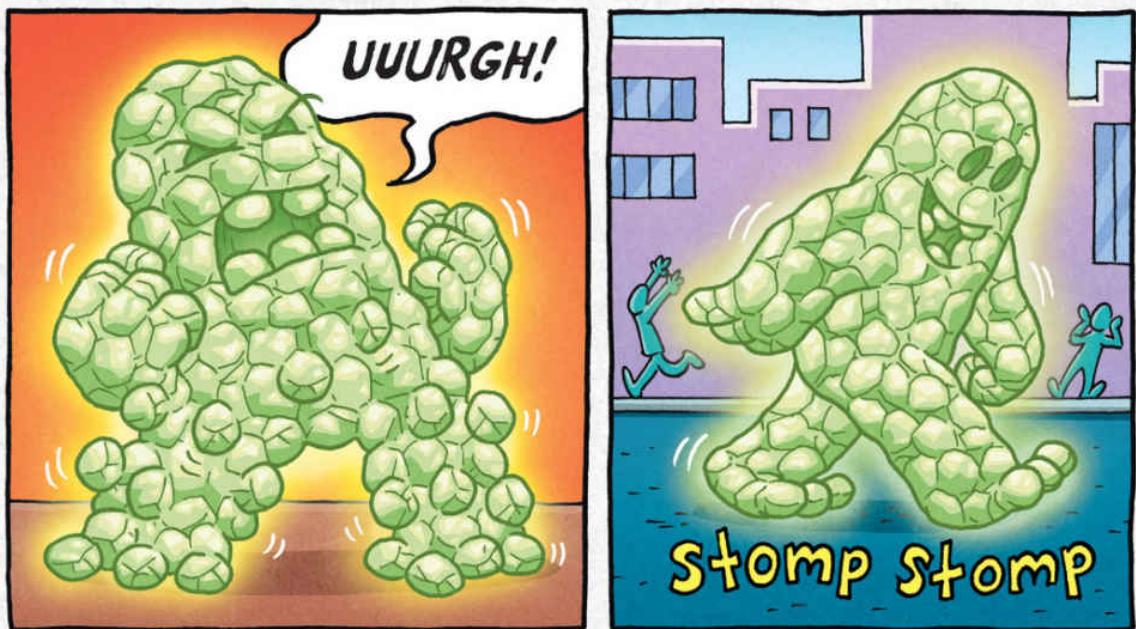
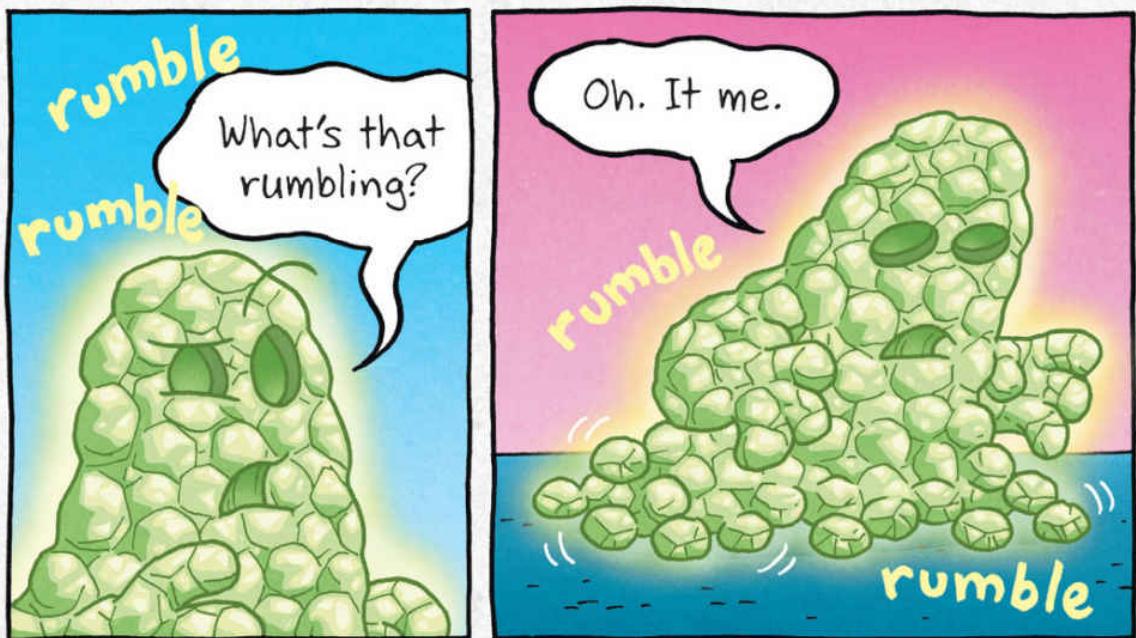
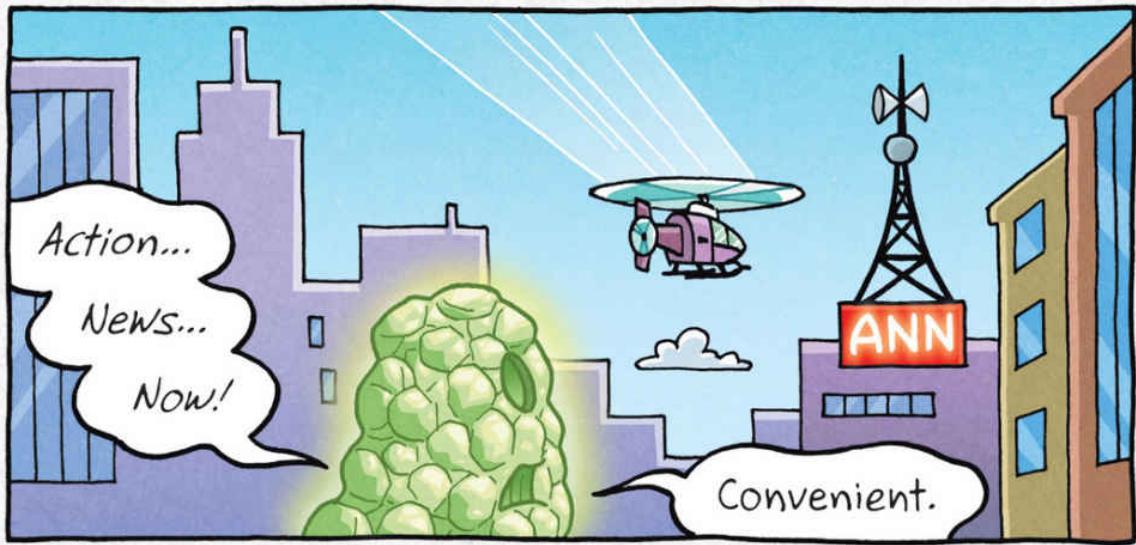
Okay, YOU'RE on bathroom duty today.



Chapter 13

But just as Mango and Brash enter the sewer, the rock monster exits it...



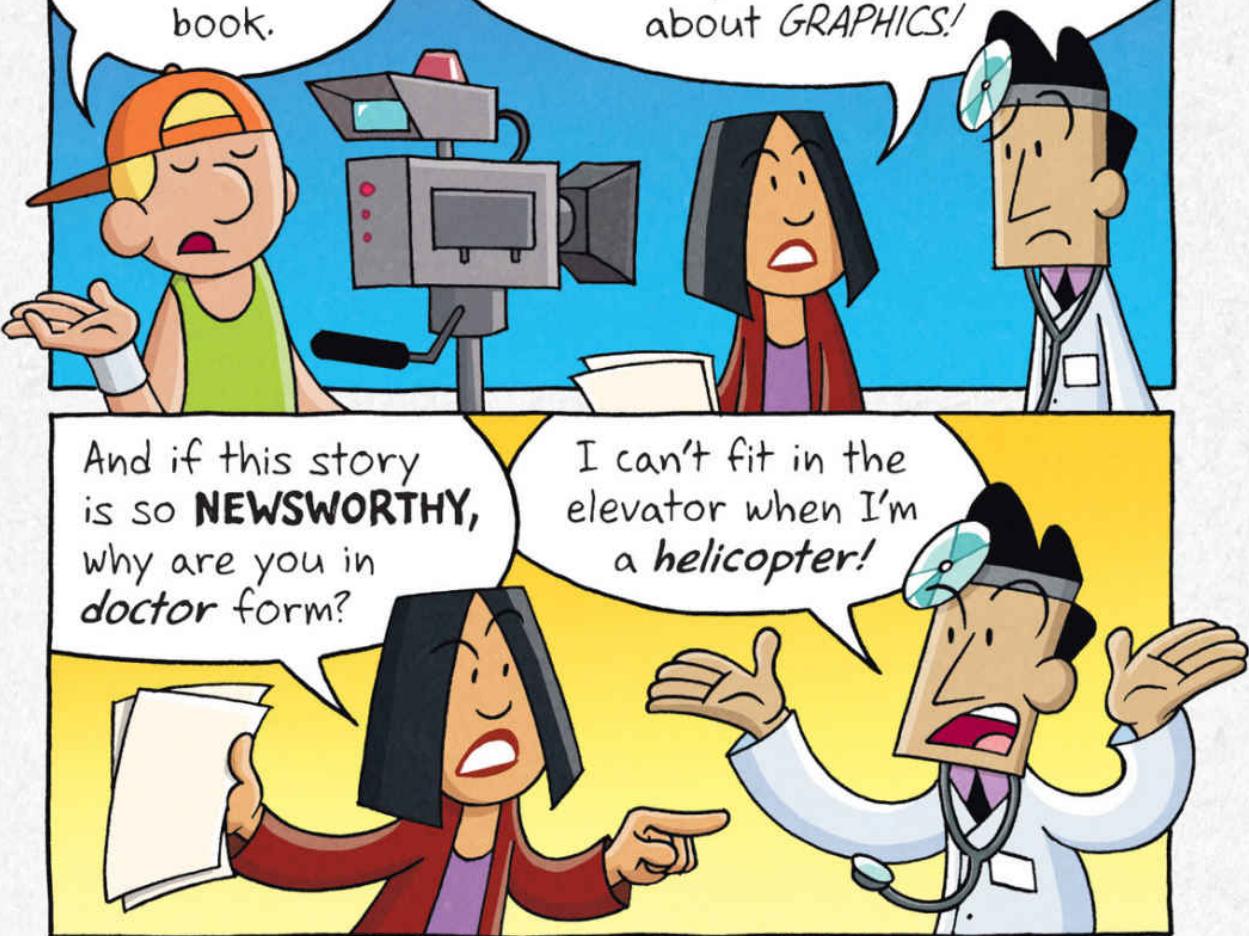


I'm telling you, Cici, you've GOT to warn your viewers that their Boulder Buddies are all a part of a **ROCK MONSTER!** It could be anywhere! It could be **RIGHT OUTSIDE YOUR DOOR!!!**



Sounds like something out of a comic book.

Unless you've got video of this rock monster, I can't go live with this story. **JOURNALISM** is all about **GRAPHICS!**



And if this story is so **NEWSWORTHY**, why are you in *doctor* form?

I can't fit in the elevator when I'm a *helicopter*!

Besides, if this rock monster hurts anyone else, they'll **NEED** a doctor!

DOCTOR!

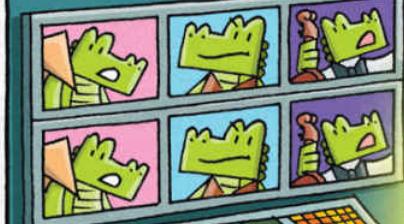
EXIT

GIMME THE NEWS!

THE ROCK MONSTER!

If only we'd listened to the doctor sooner!

I want NEWS...of HIM!



My exposé of the Investigator
doesn't air until tonight—

But I suppose
I can make an
exception!

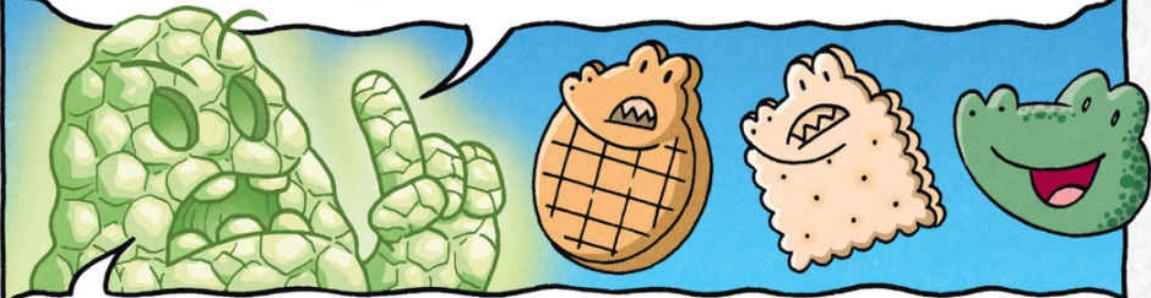
He shows up in quite a lot of archived news footage.
I've compiled every appearance I've found so far...

I believe that's him disguised as an astronaut...
There he's disguised as an orchestra musician...

And here he is **naked**, which isn't much of a disguise,
but he's being swallowed by a large waffle—that later
got crushed by the even larger robot Investigator!

I...I **WAS** that waffle!

Yes... YES! I remember now... I was a **waffle**—NO!
I was a **cracker**—NO! I was a...dile! A **CROCODILE**!
A secret agent crocodile named **DARYL**!



This Investigator... He was my partner—**BRASH**! And Brash didn't **SAVE** me! **HE** made me into a **MONSTER**!

I must have... **REVENGE!!!**

Wait, what's this?



Oh, this is from when that cracker company got shut down for baking **toxic waste** into their saltines. One chef died! And even a cat got fired! But look—**THAT** chef is the Investigator in disguise!



That...that was the mission where Brash left me for dead...

I've seen this character somewhere else...



He was there... Where Anjie found my remains...

He...he works at the **CITY DUMP!**

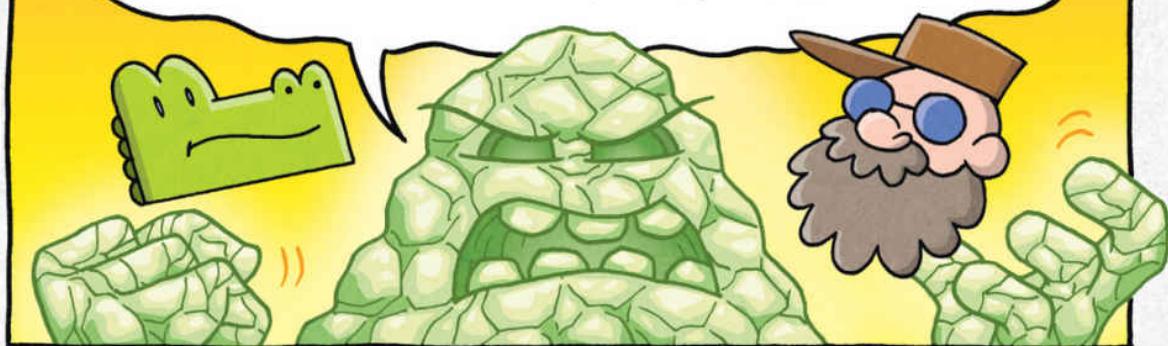


That garbageman used to run that cracker factory!
He...he's **SAUL T. BYPRODUCTS!**

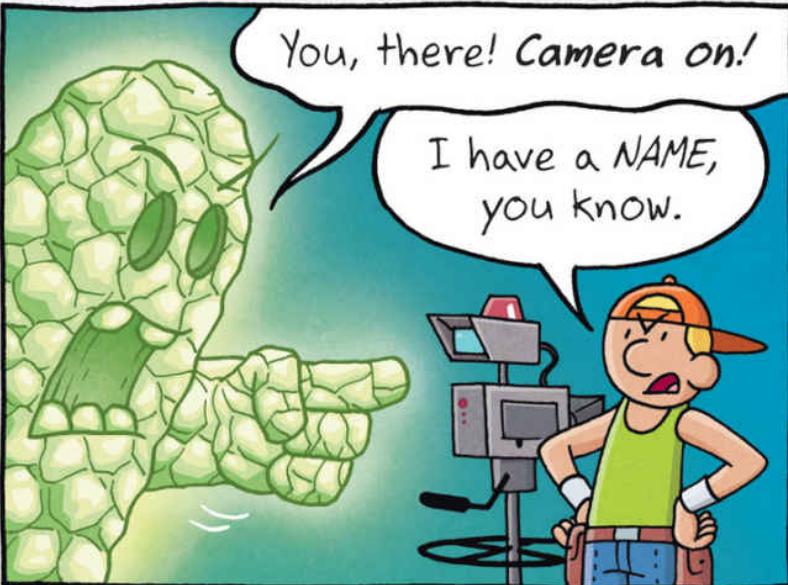
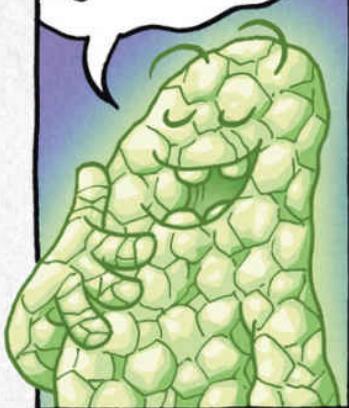


I fell into that radioactive saltine dough because his bakery had shoddy safety standards! That railing was WAY too low. AND WHY WAS A CAT EVEN WORKING THERE?

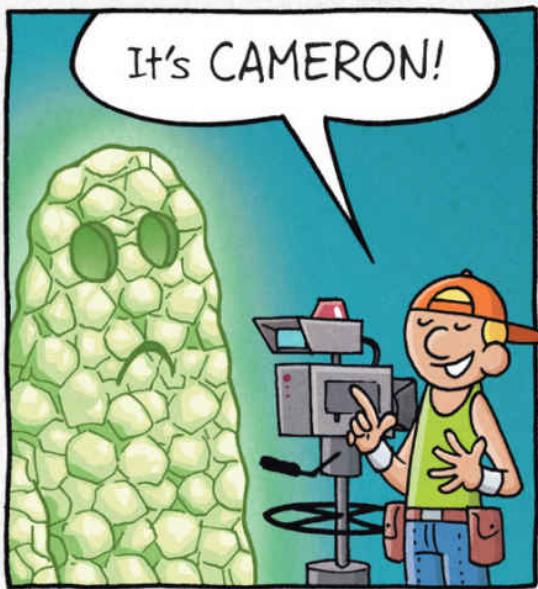
Brash may have taken a *PIECE* of me... But Saul has taken *EVERYTHING* from me! My friend...my job... my identity...my *LIFE!* **SAUL T. BYPRODUCTS** is the *TRUE* villain in all of this. **HE** made me into a **MONSTER!** I must have... **REVENGE!!!**



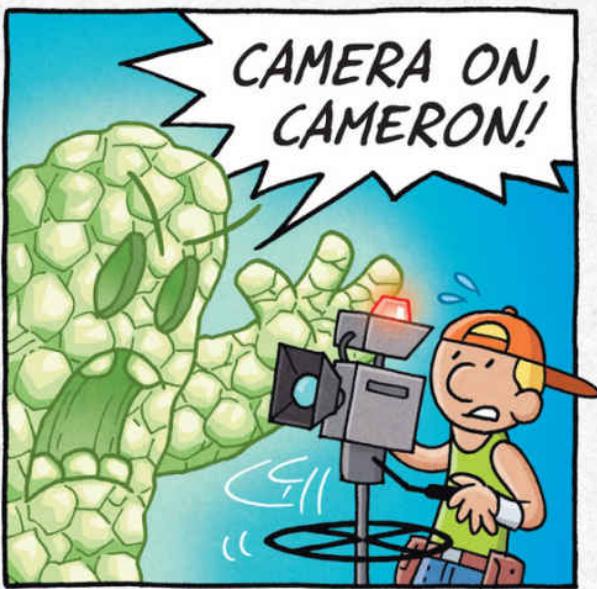
Finally, some character growth!

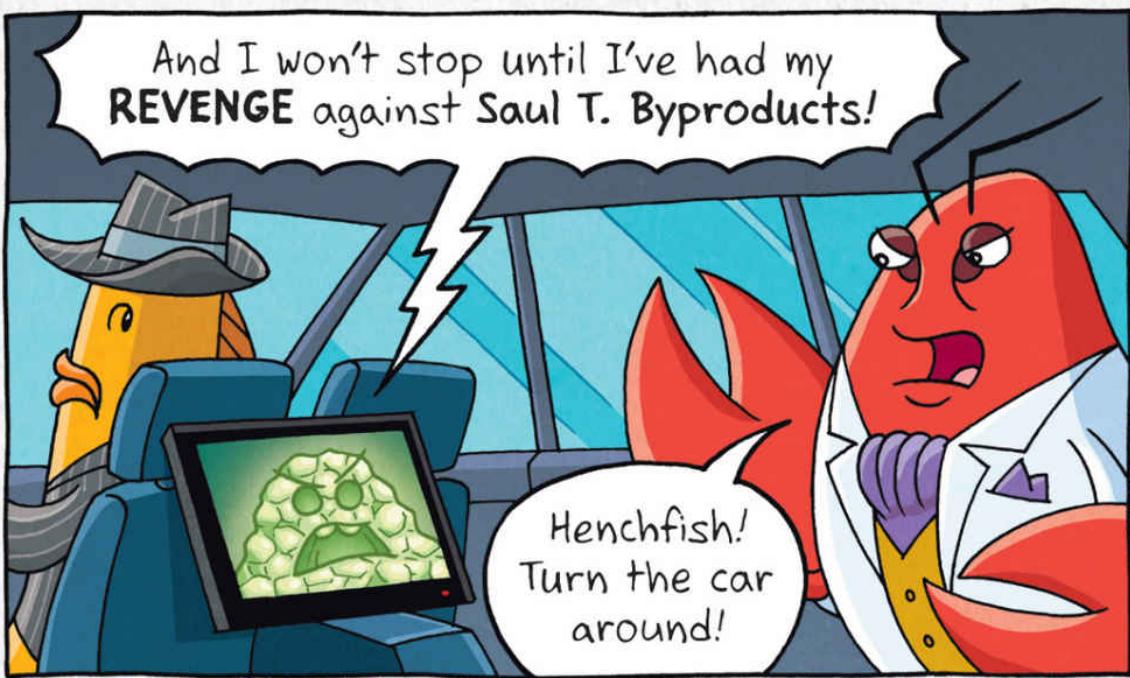
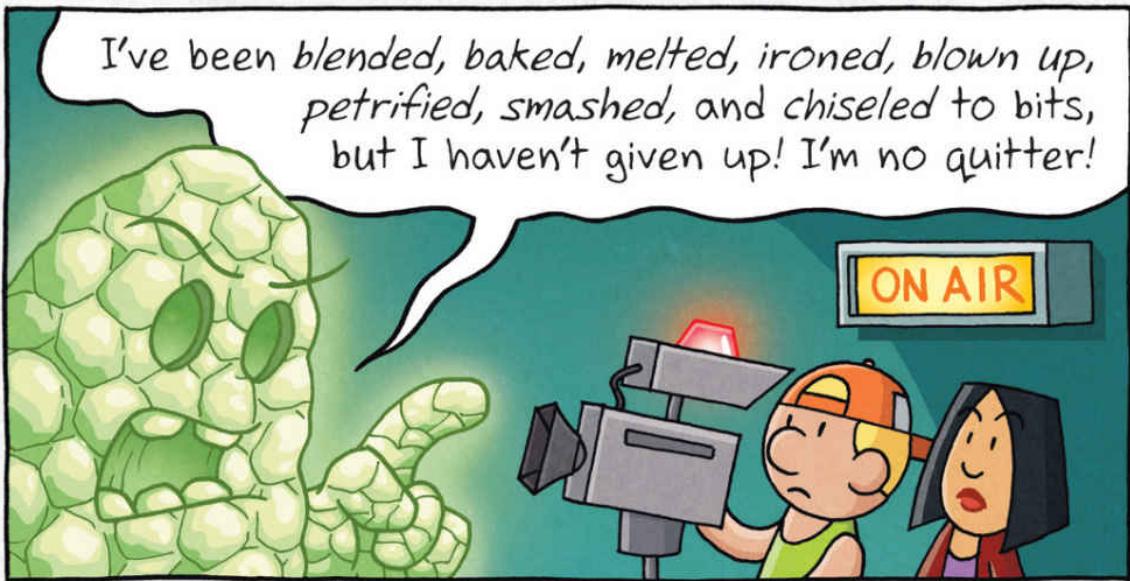


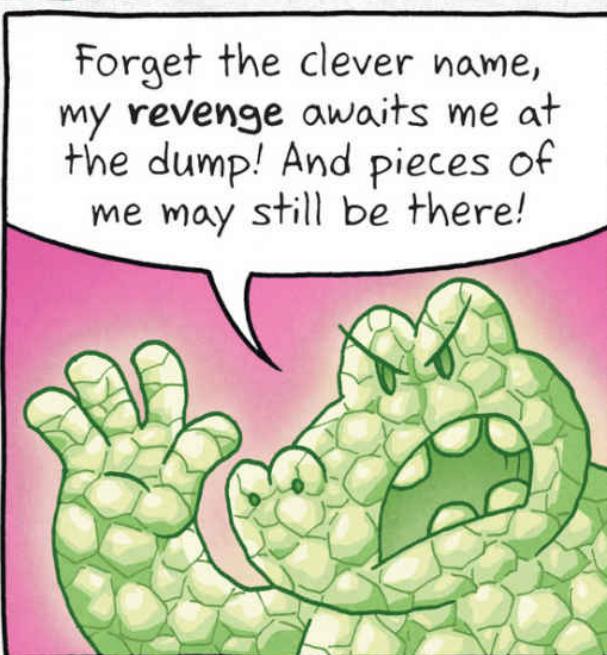
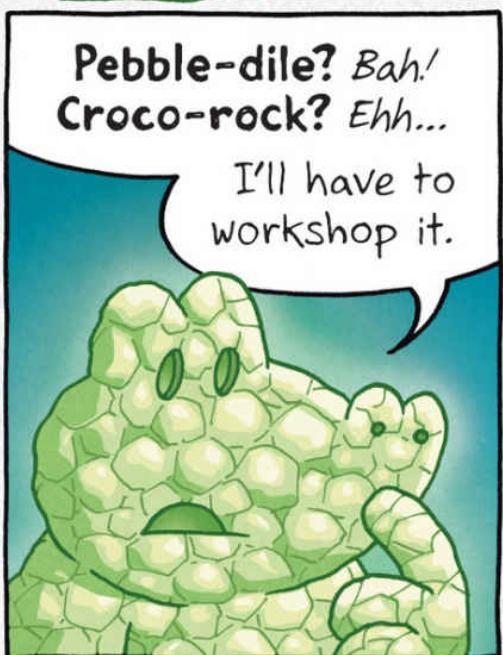
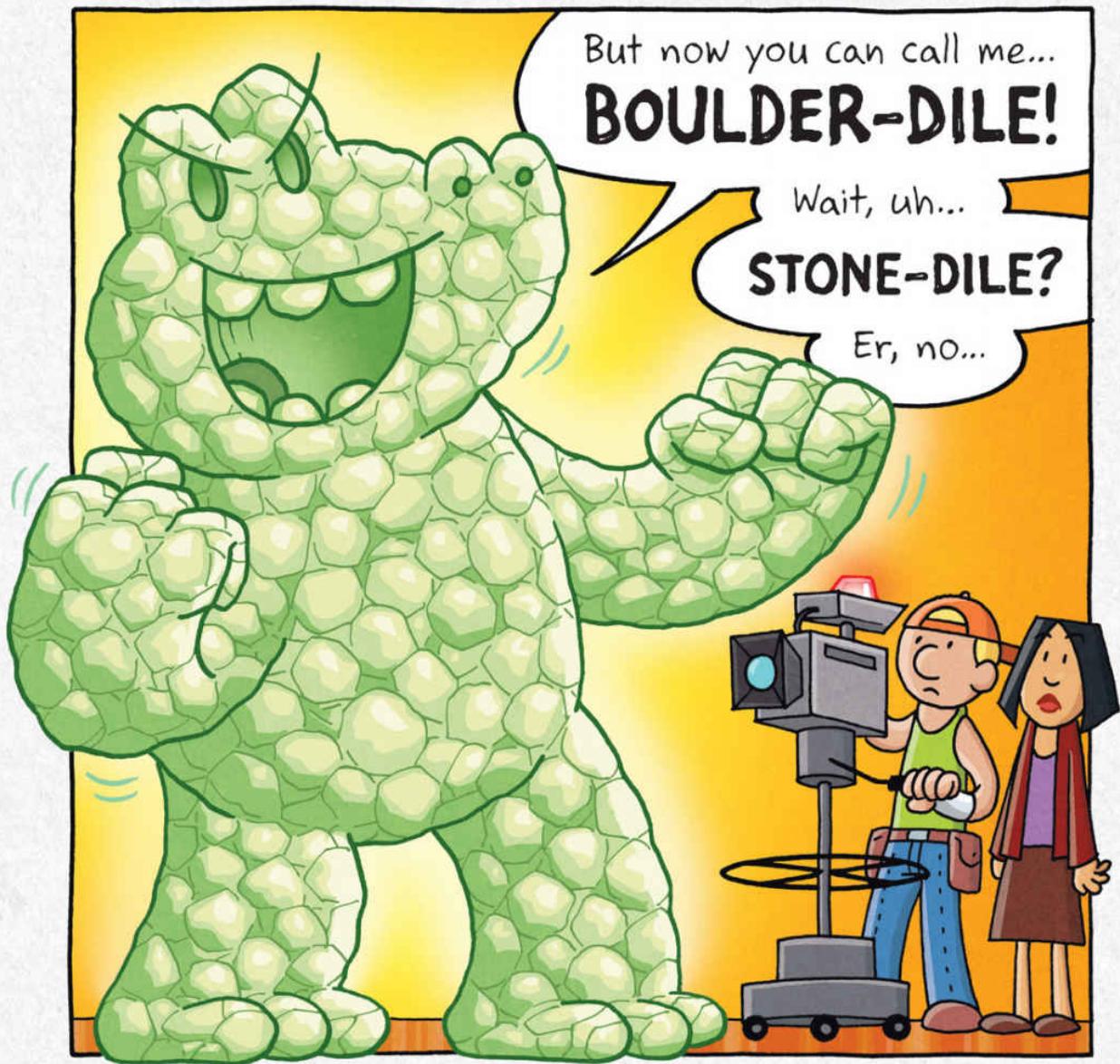
It's CAMERON!



CAMERA ON, CAMERON!



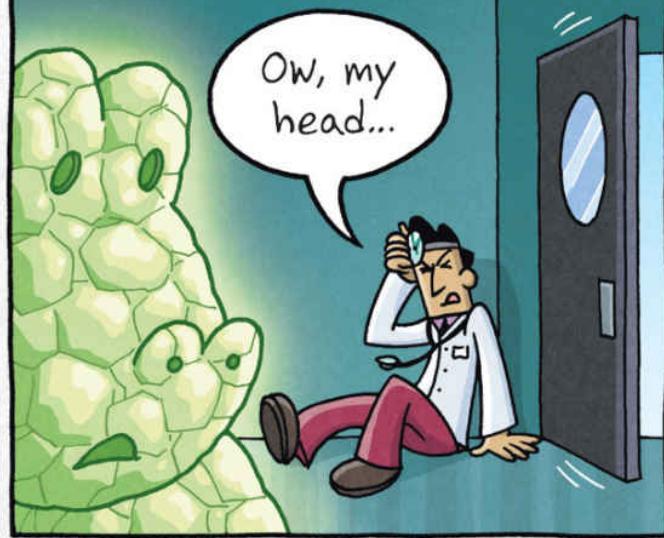




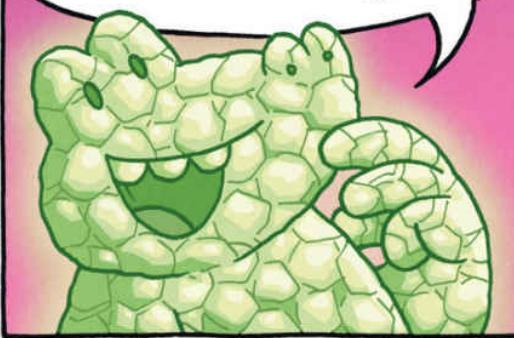
I just need to find a way to get to the dump fast...



OW, my head...



I DID recognize that news helicopter! You're **HelicopterMan, MD!** Or something.



And have I got **NEWS** for **YOU!**



Chapter 14

Anjie's been selling Boulder Buddies for a while now. Why did they only come to life two days ago?

The General Inspector's went missing just a few hours after I held one of them.

!GASP!

I didn't *DROP* that kid's Boulder Buddy—it *JUMPED* out of my hands! It reacted to **ME!** Whatever is left of **Daryl** in those rocks must have been lying dormant until **I** physically *touched* one.

And now, somehow, *each* and *every* Boulder Buddy that's out there is starting to remember it's a part of my former partner!

They took Anjie into the sewer because that's *exactly* the sort of thing **Crackerdile** has done in the past!

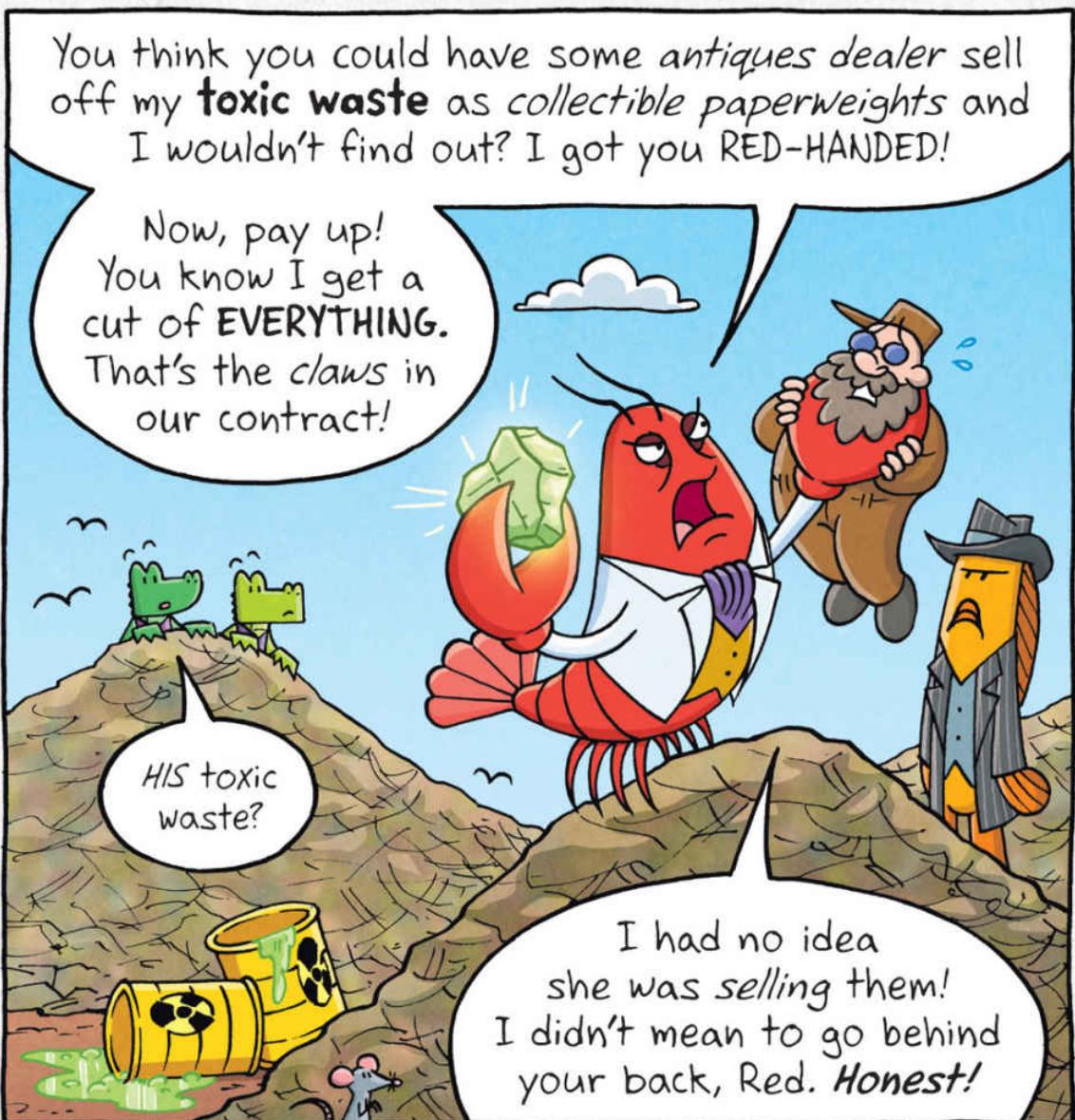
Why didn't the G.I.'s Boulder Buddy react to **HIM**?

This is personal, Mango. Even as a pile of **mindless** rocks, Daryl still blames **ME** for what happened to him.

This should be it!

Let's just hope any Boulder Buddies **HERE** haven't remembered that part yet.

PEE-YEW!
This place smells like an **antiques** shop.



Who leaves open barrels of **toxic waste** just lying around for anyone to stumble upon? I mean, really.

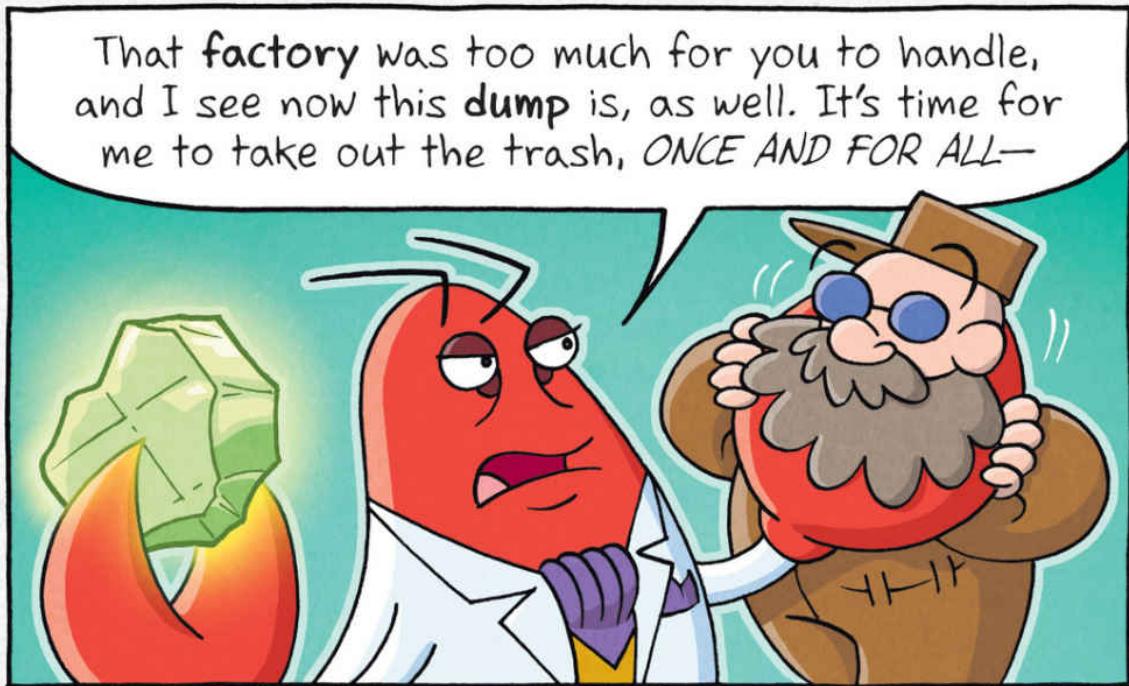
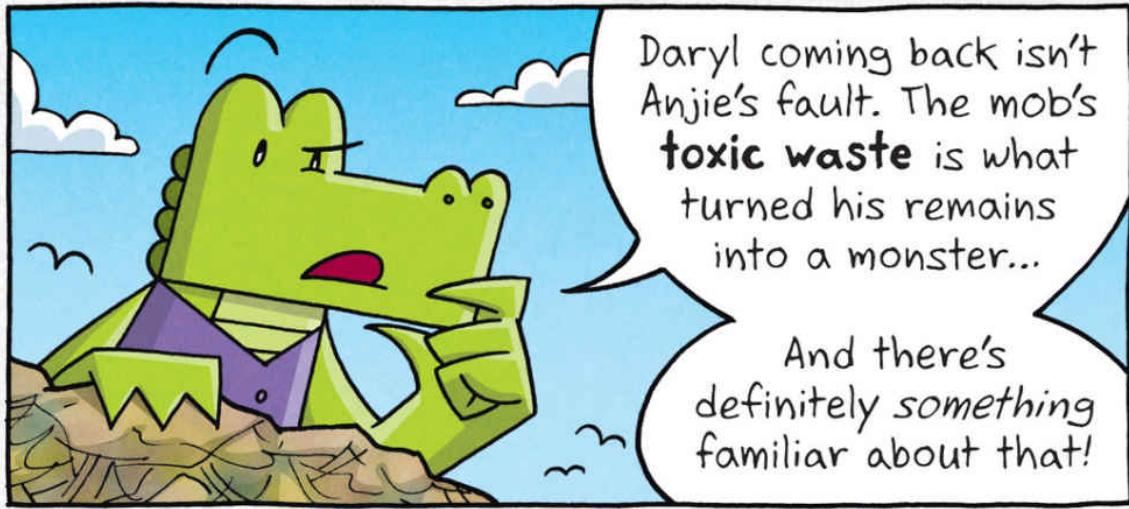


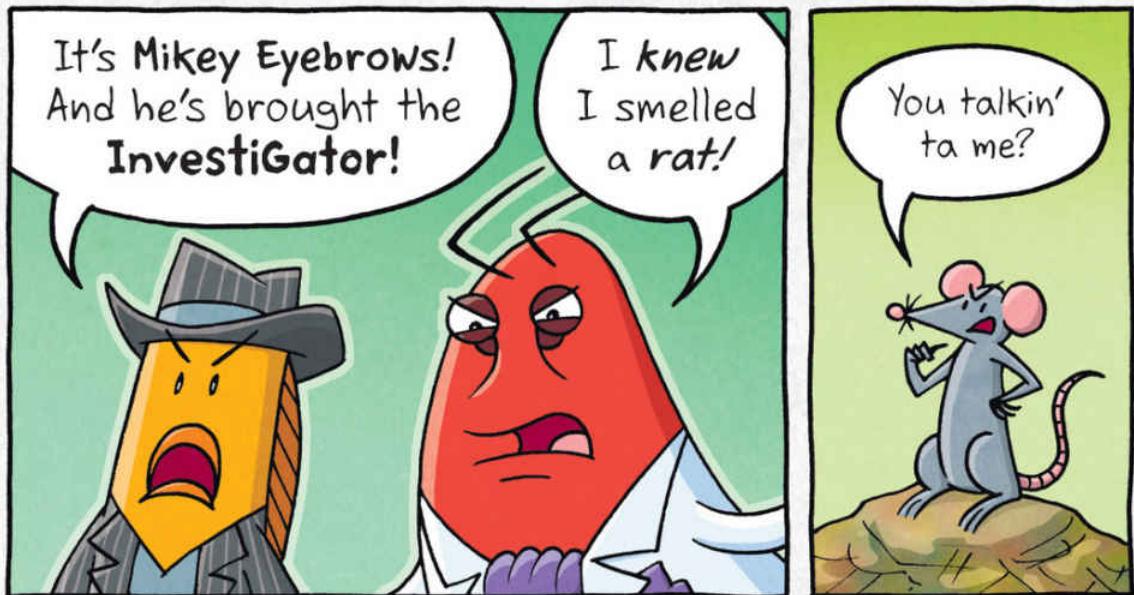
You know the score. You work for ME. And according to my henchfish, now I got the **InvestiGator** looking into me. You think I want that kinda heat?



If Anjie's been getting the rocks from that garbage-man... And HE works for Red... Then Anjie **WAS** working with the mob, even if she didn't know it!

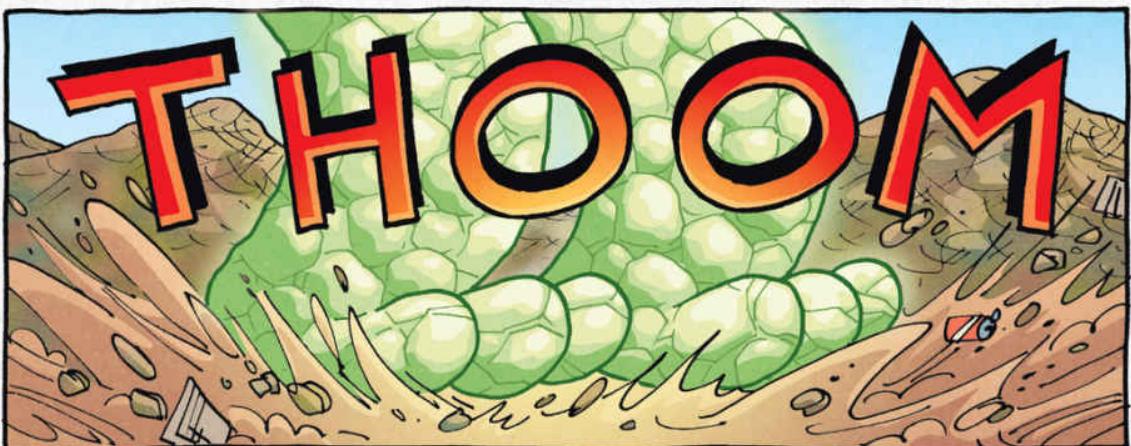
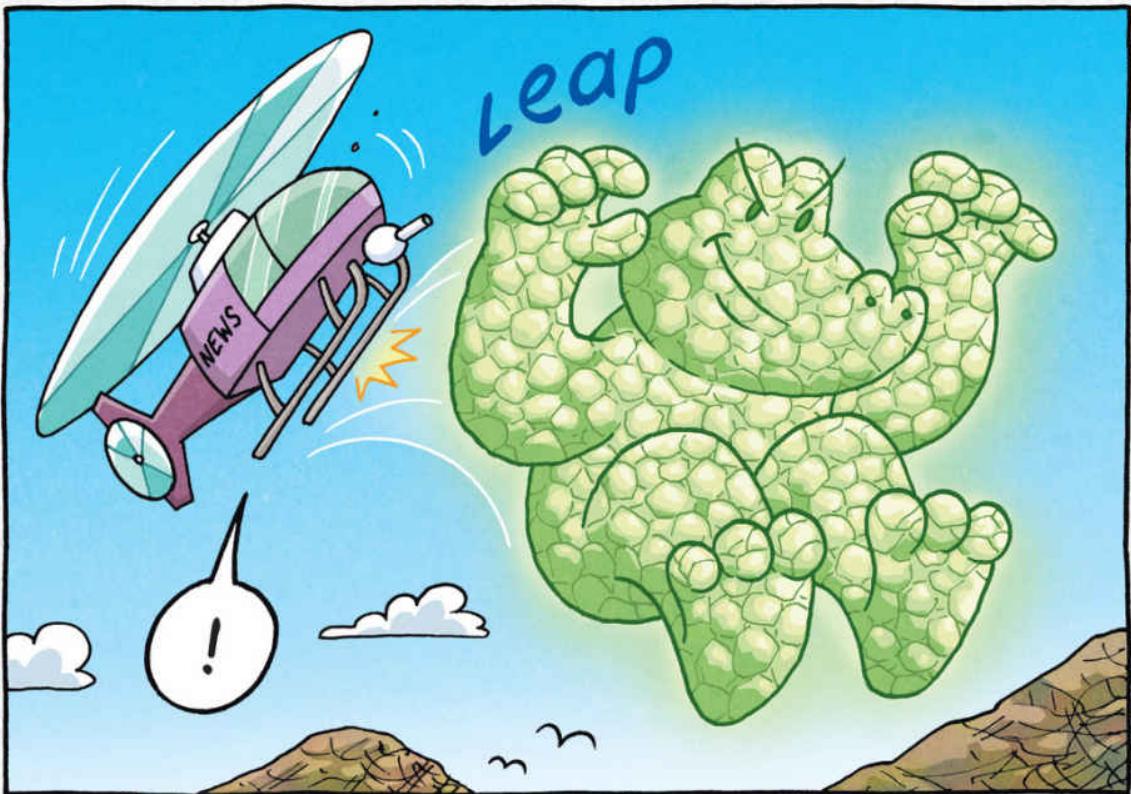




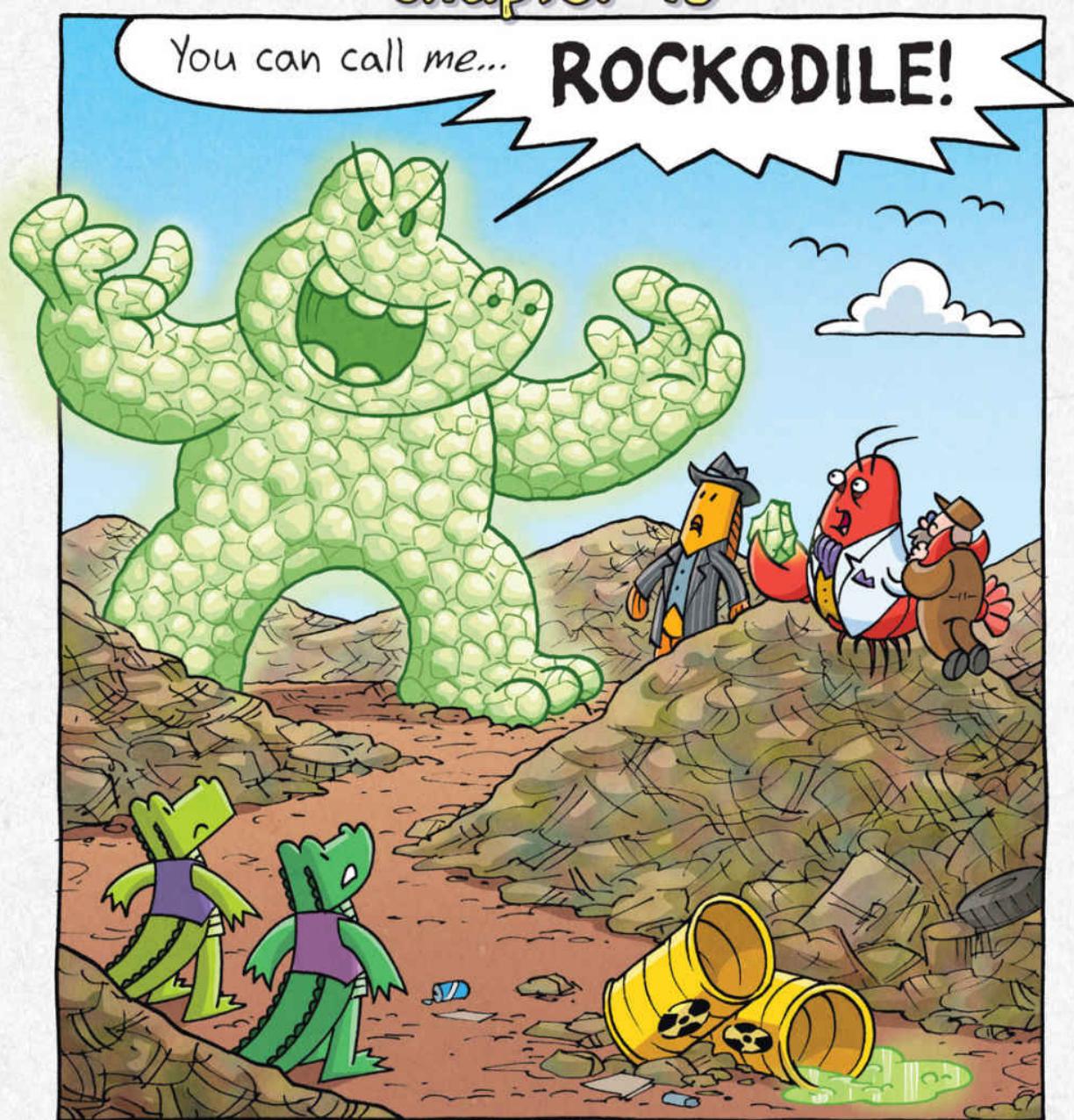


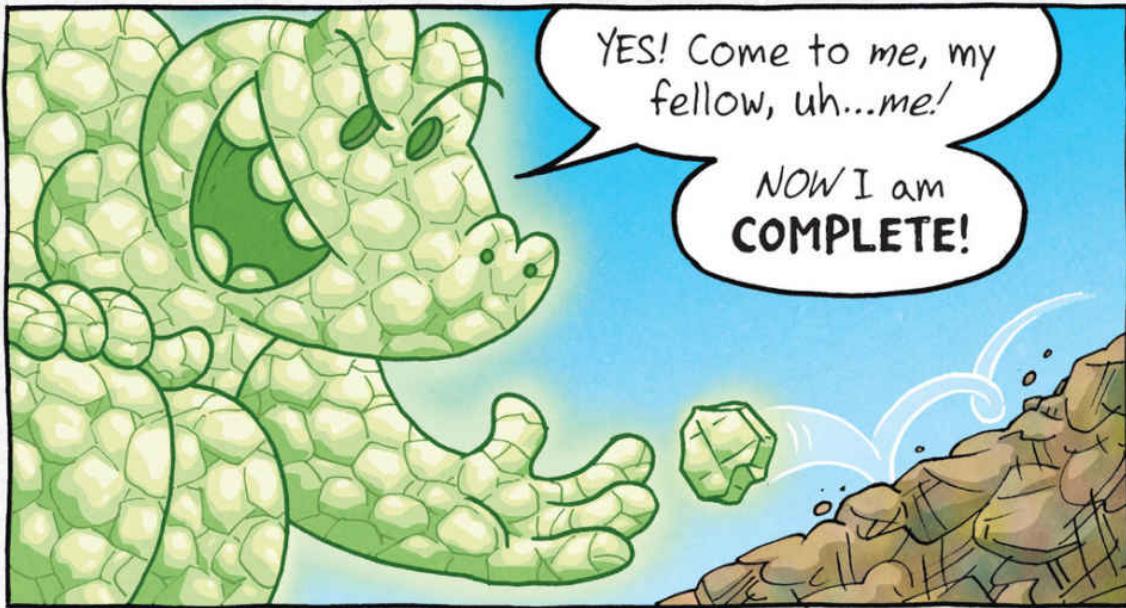
chop chop Chop Chop Chop

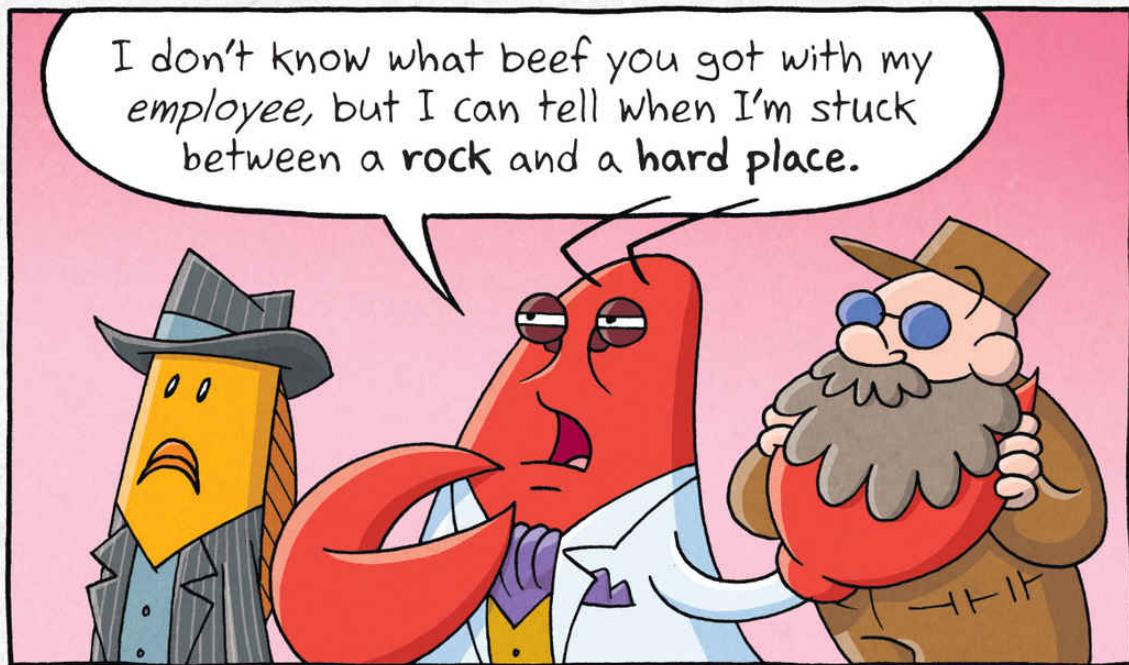
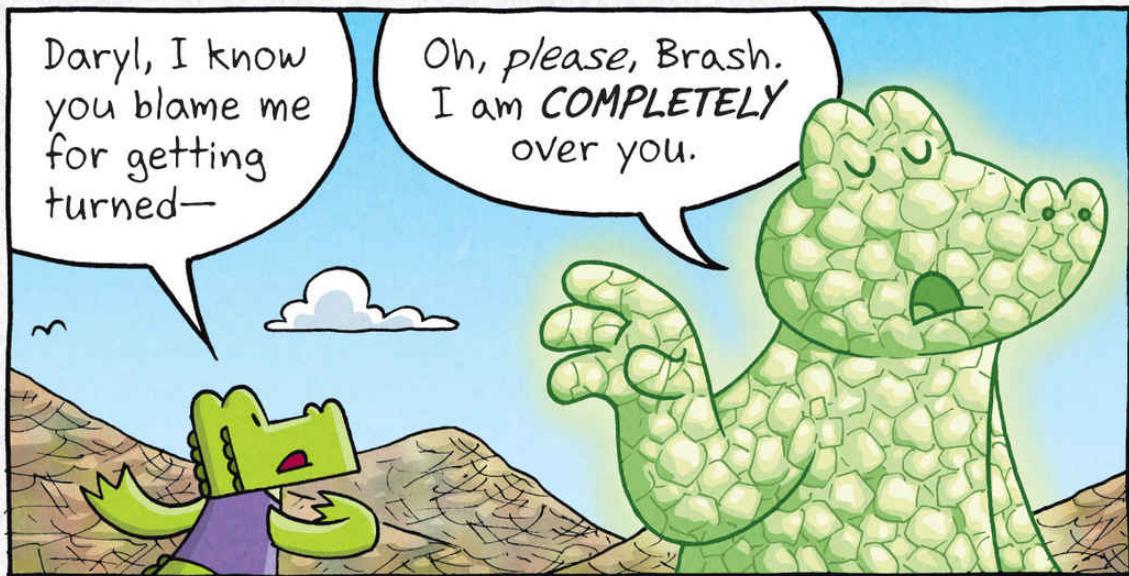


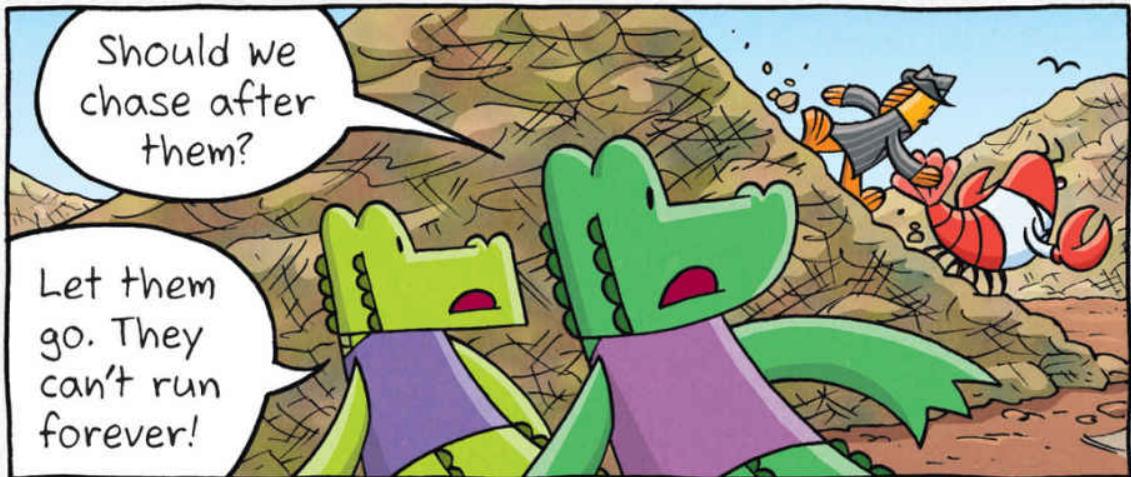


Chapter 15

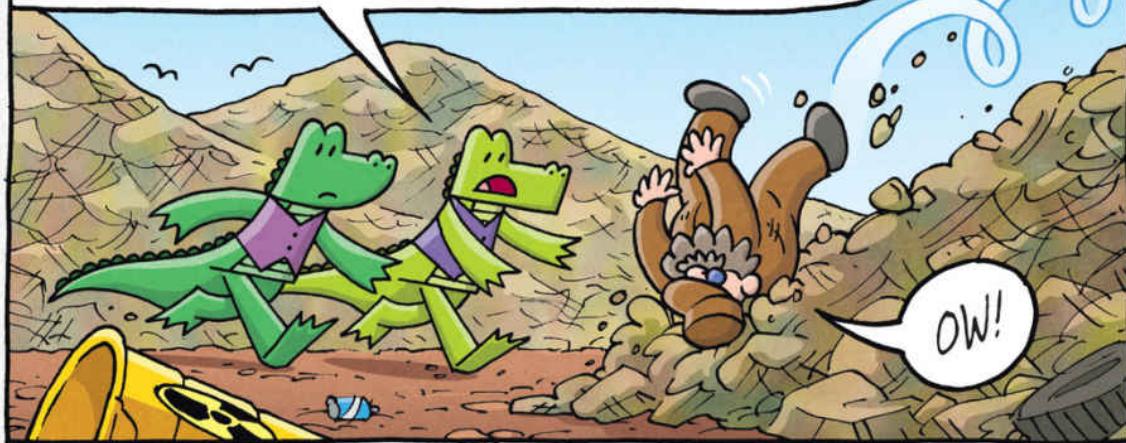




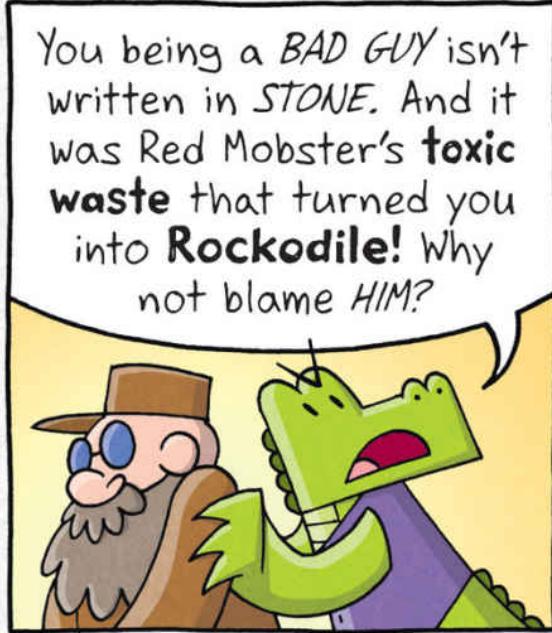




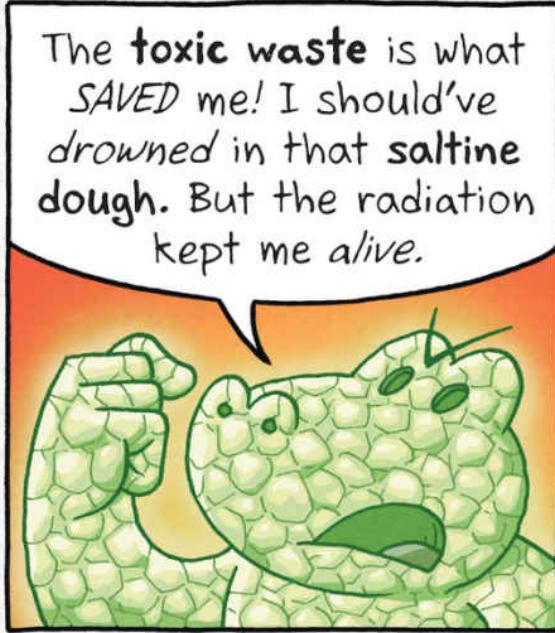
This garbageman will have enough dirt on Red Mobster to put him away for good.

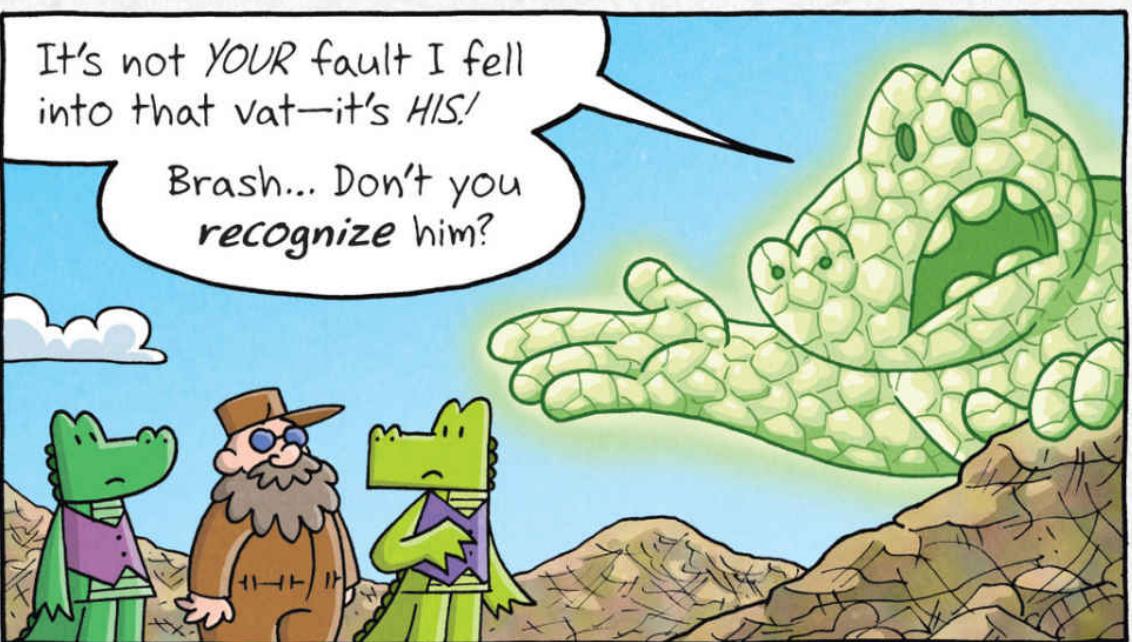


You being a **BAD GUY** isn't written in **STONE**. And it was Red Mobster's **toxic waste** that turned you into **Rockodile!** Why not blame **HIM**?



The **toxic waste** is what **SAVED** me! I should've drowned in that saltine dough. But the radiation kept me alive.





You're **Saul T. Byproducts!** It was **YOUR** cracker company that was disposing of nuclear waste by baking it into saltines!



I wouldn't say **BAKING** it in. Really it **LEAKED** in.

Daryl's right! He **NEVER** would've fallen over that railing if your bakery followed **proper safety precautions!**



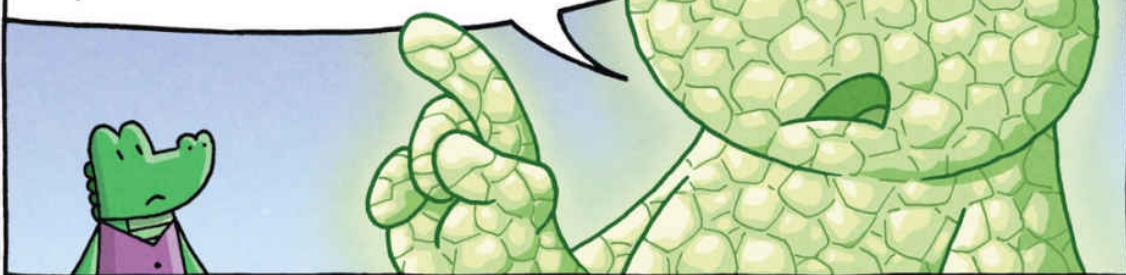
You see? This man **IS** the reason I became a monster—**TWICE!**



Isn't it **THREE** times? First **Crackerdile**, then **Waffledile**, now **Rockodile**?



No, no. I turned **MYSELF** into a **waffle**. So Saul and his *irresponsible safety procedures* are only directly responsible for **TWO** of my monstrous forms.

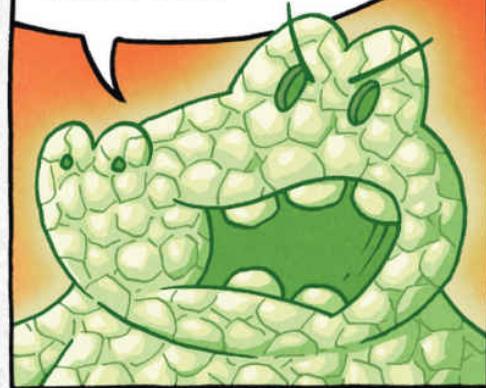


You—You turned my partner into a **MONSTER!** And then you did it again!



Uh...the cat did it!

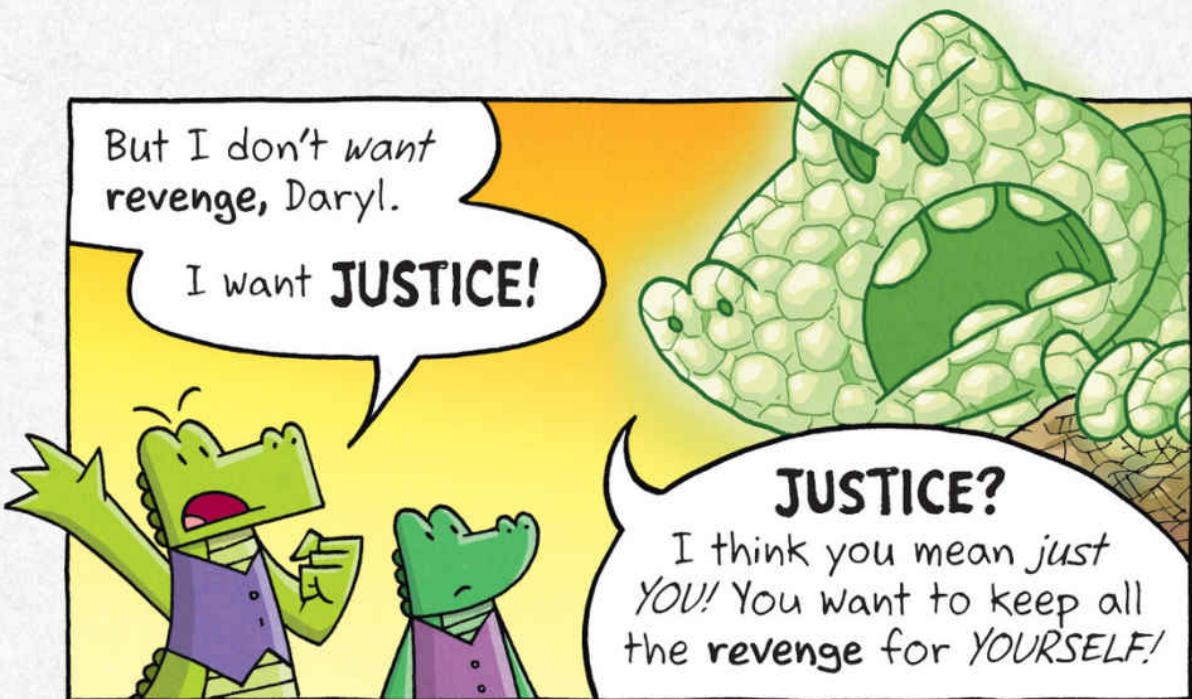
Saul took everything from me, Brash. And he took **ME** away from **YOU!**



Now that he's caught, we can **BOTH** get revenge for all the harm he's caused us!

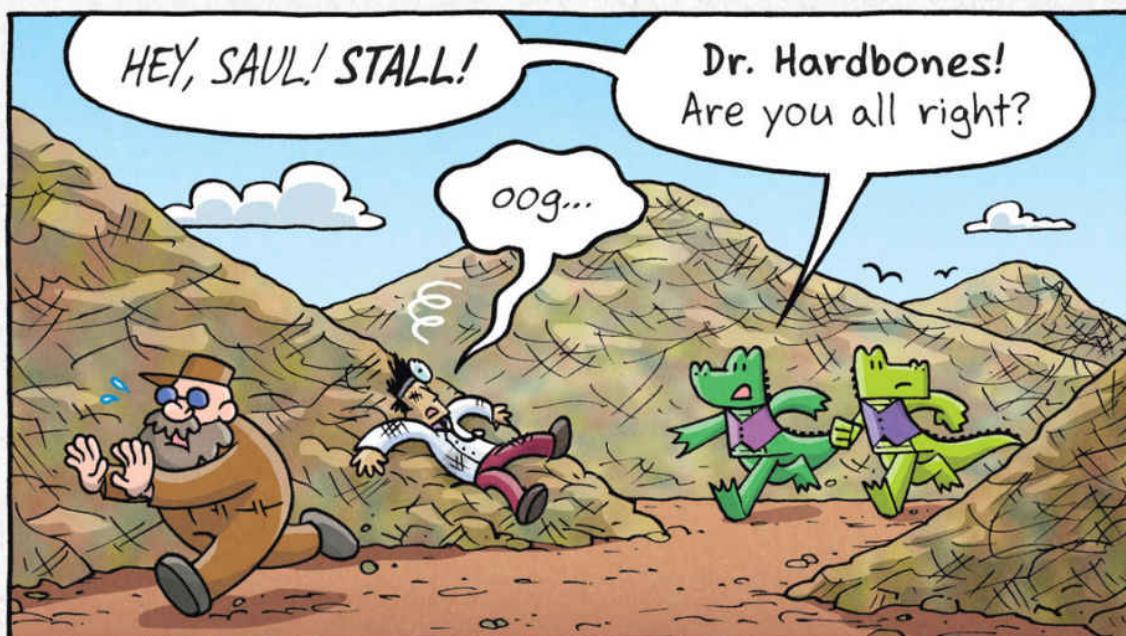
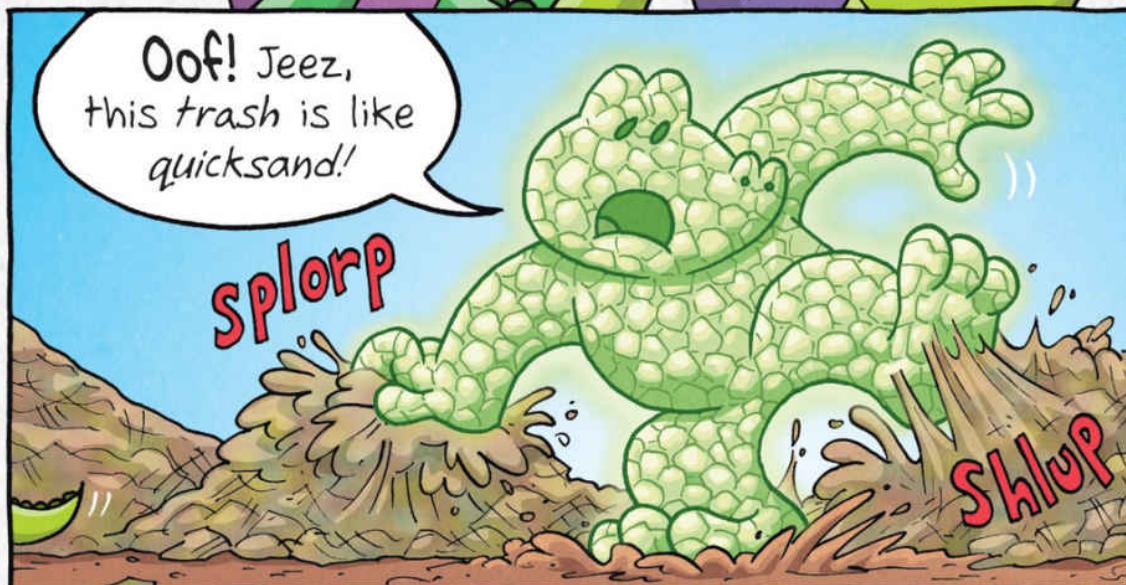
Maybe we both **DO** deserve revenge...





This is the point in the book where I tell you you can't reason with Daryl, Brash. It's like a theme or something.

I won't give up, Mango. But now let's just get to Saul first!



I'm alive...
but I feel
like garbage!

I know you're injured, but we really
need your help! Do you think our
escape from this trash heap would
be **NEWSWORTHY** enough for
Doctor Copter?

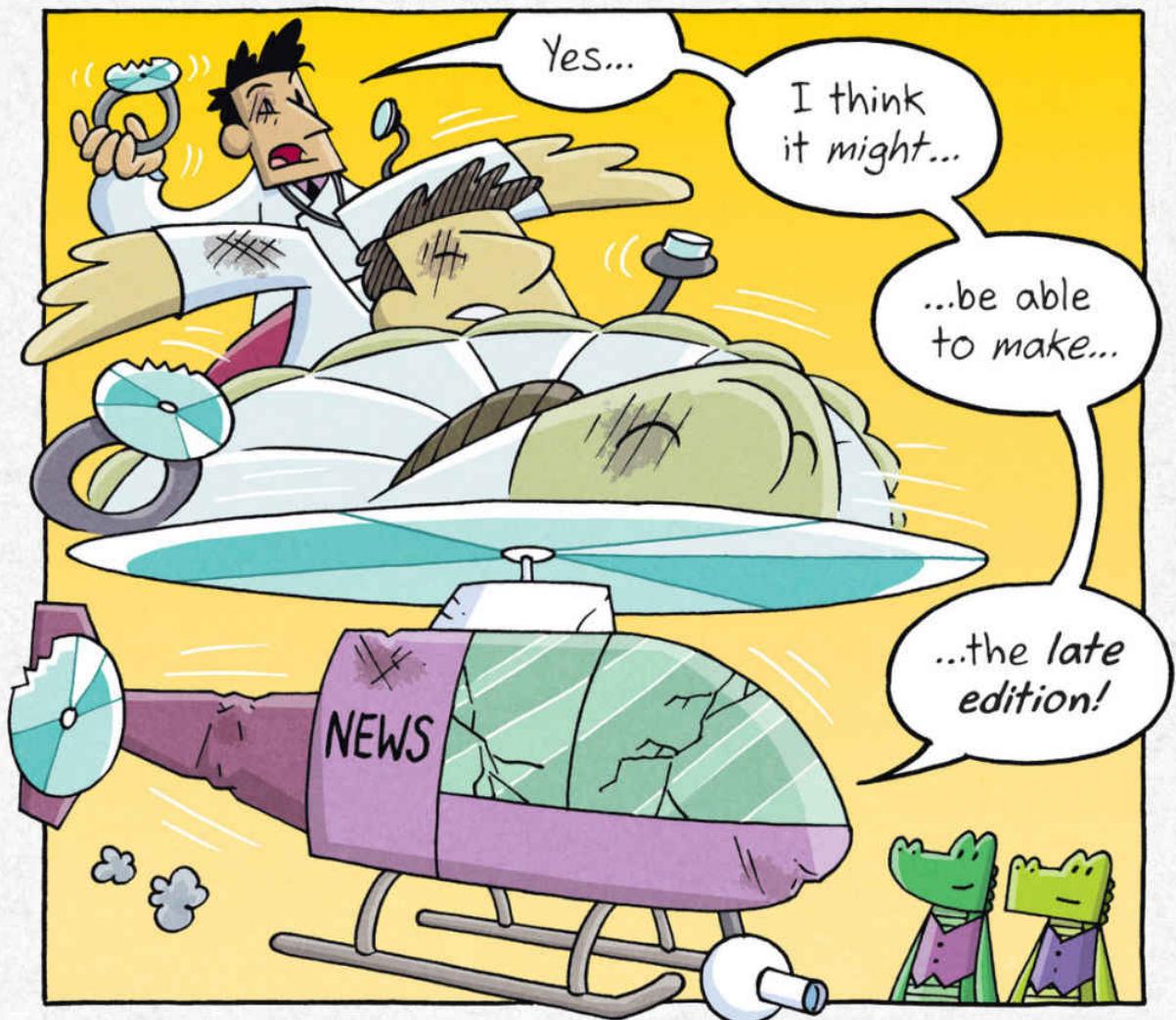


Yes...

I think
it might...

...be able
to make...

...the late
edition!



I'm not sure how long I'll be able to stay airborne, but hop on!

sputter

NEWS



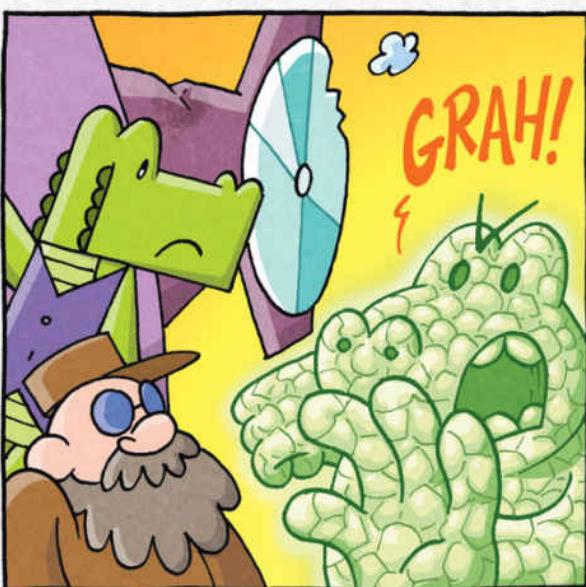
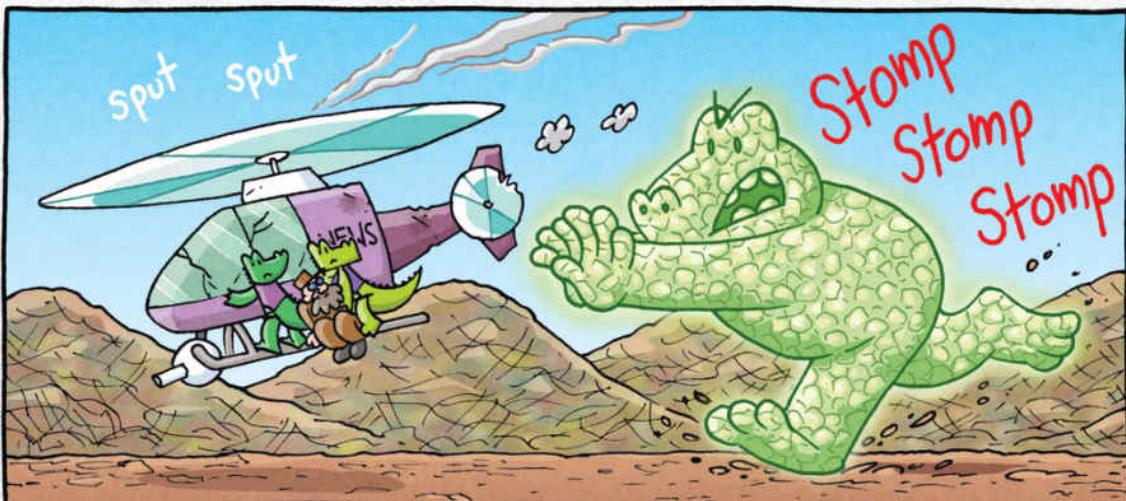
Rockodile is right behind us! Let's go!

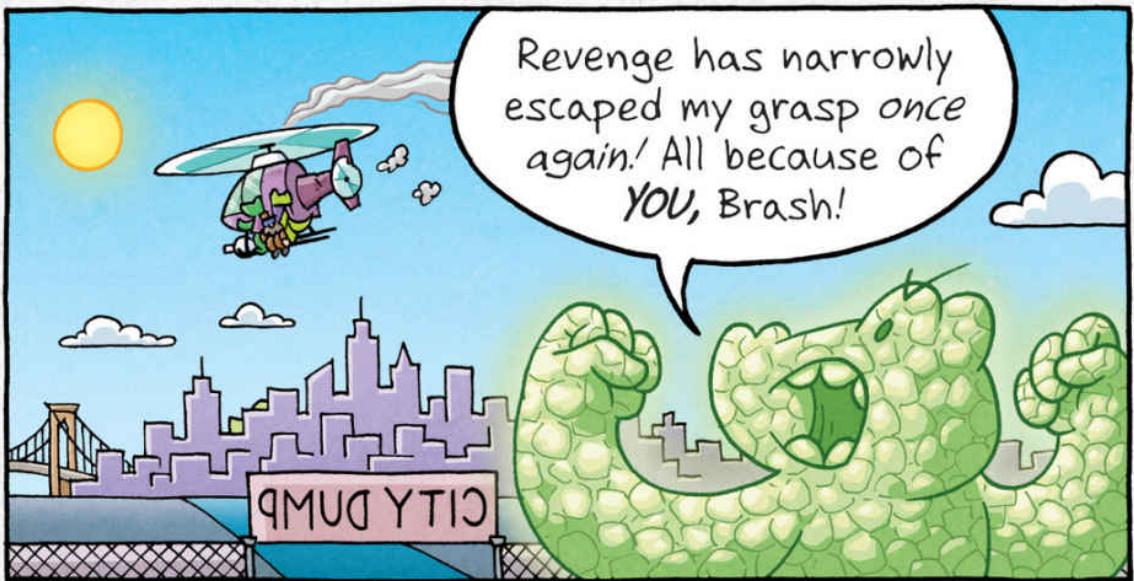
And scoop up that ex-baker on the way out!

Curse these stubby legs!

biP

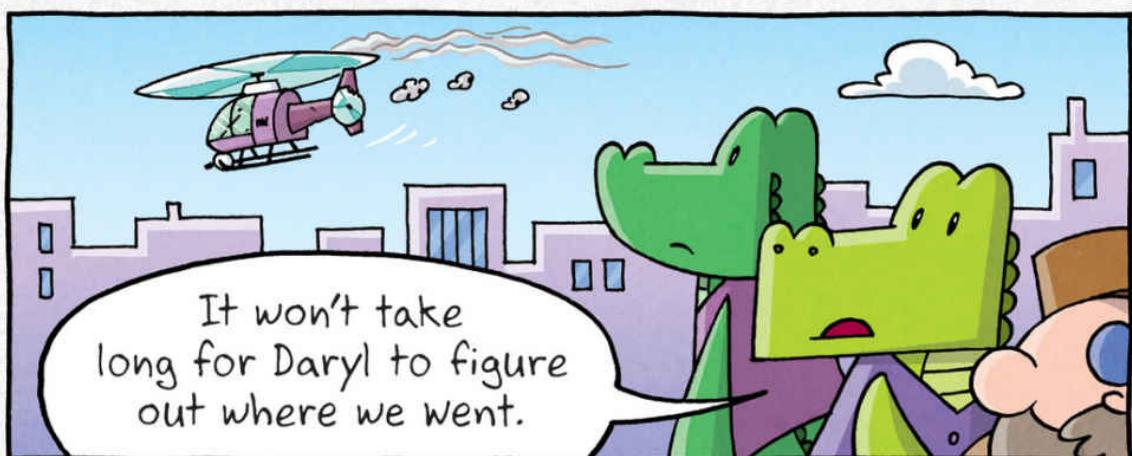
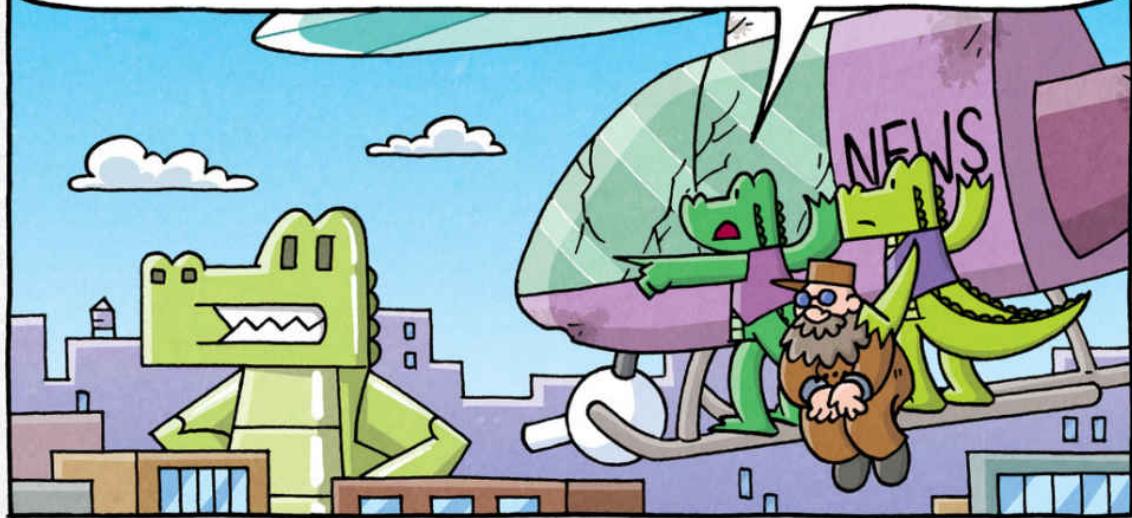






Chapter 16

Drop us off at our **InvestiQuarters!** It should be strong enough to keep Rockodile at bay for a while.



Welcome back, InvestiGators! Who wants tea and crumpets?

Ooh, I do!

YOU GET NOTHING!

C-ORB! D-ORB! Stay out here
and keep your
eyes open for
Rockodile!

RockoWHO?

You'll know him
when you see him!

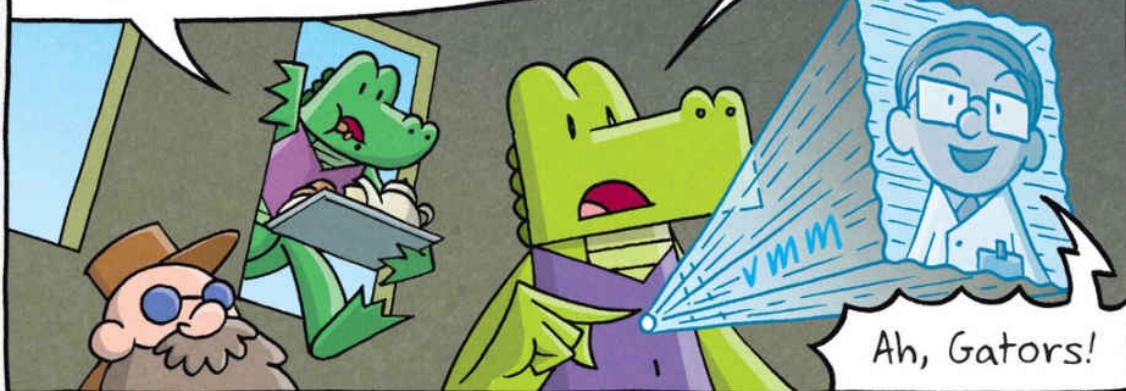
scratch
scratch

I'll take this.

YOINK!

Brash, we've got to figure out a plan to stop Rockodile once he gets here!

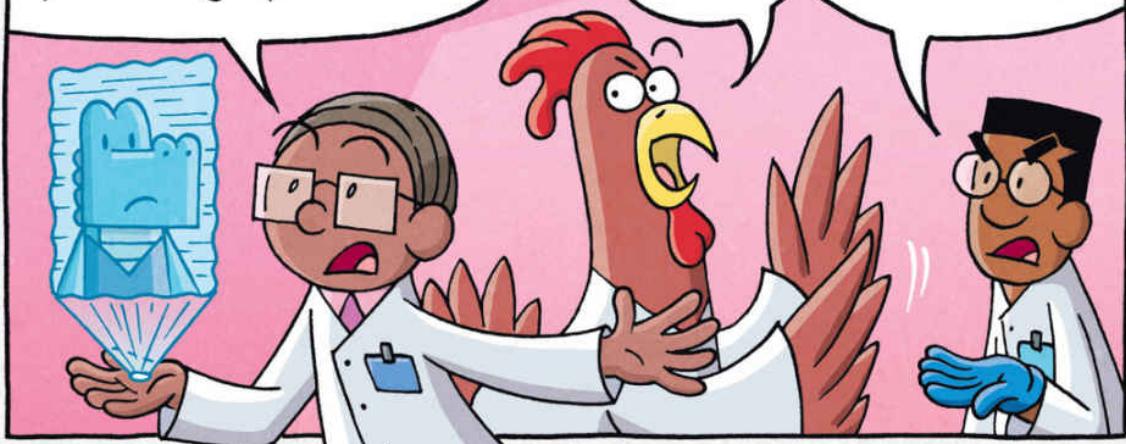
Already on it, Mango!



That rock of yours got **VERY** aggressive after you hung up on us!

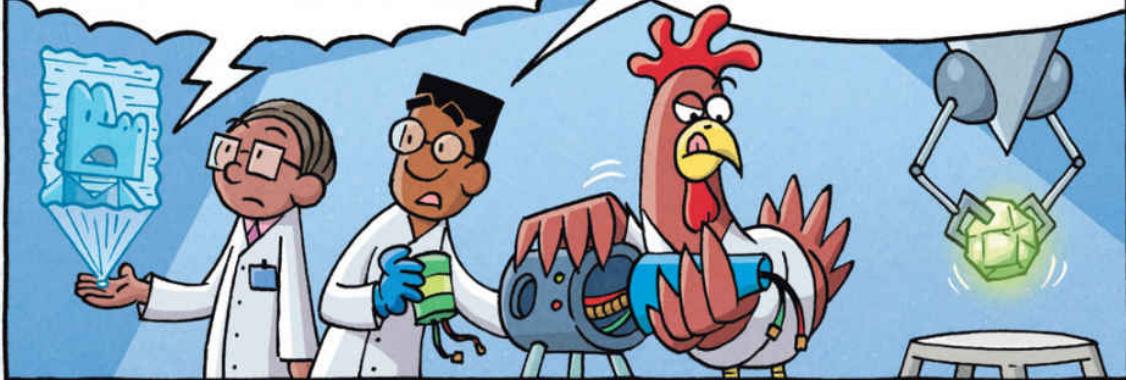
It tried to *bite* me!

No, it didn't! Rocks don't have teeth!



Doctor, the **TOXIC WASTE** in it is what's keeping it alive. Is there any way to **NEUTRALIZE** it?

We're already working on a **laser** that will **EXTRACT** the **radiation** from the rock.



Once the toxic waste is removed, your Boulder Buddy should, well... **DIE.**

I...understand, Doc.

Just do whatever it takes and get here as quickly as you can!

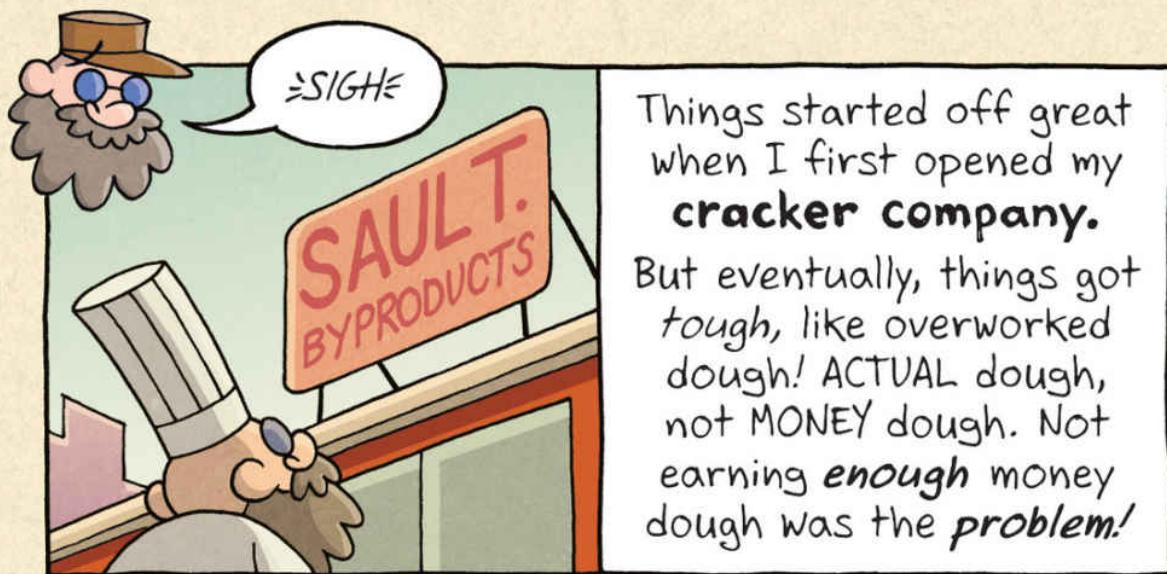
Now, while the scientists work up their solution, it's time for **YOU** to talk trash. And by "trash" I mean tell us how you went from a **baker** to a **dump operator** working for the mob. Spill the beans.

Unless they're licorice jellybeans, 'cause **BLECH!**

I had nothing to do with any of this! I'm just a **scapegoat!**

You're not a **goat!** And there's no **escape!**

**BARE
YOUR SOUL,
SAUL!**

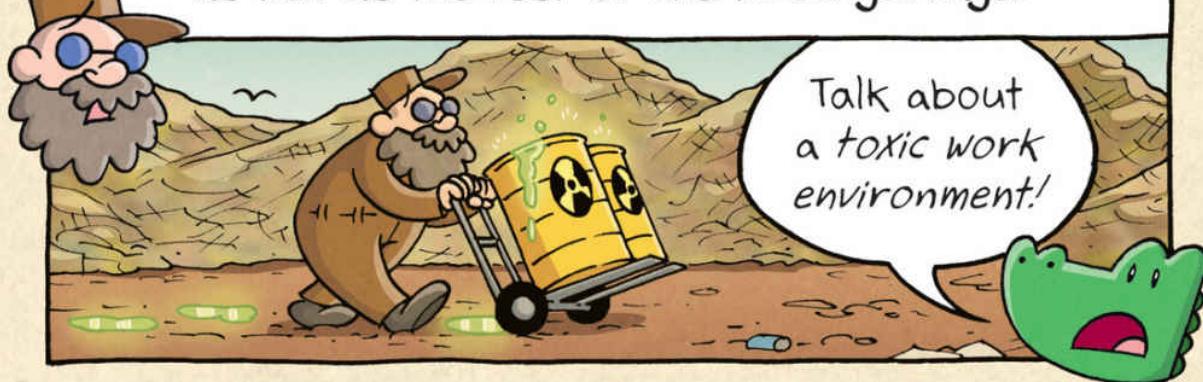
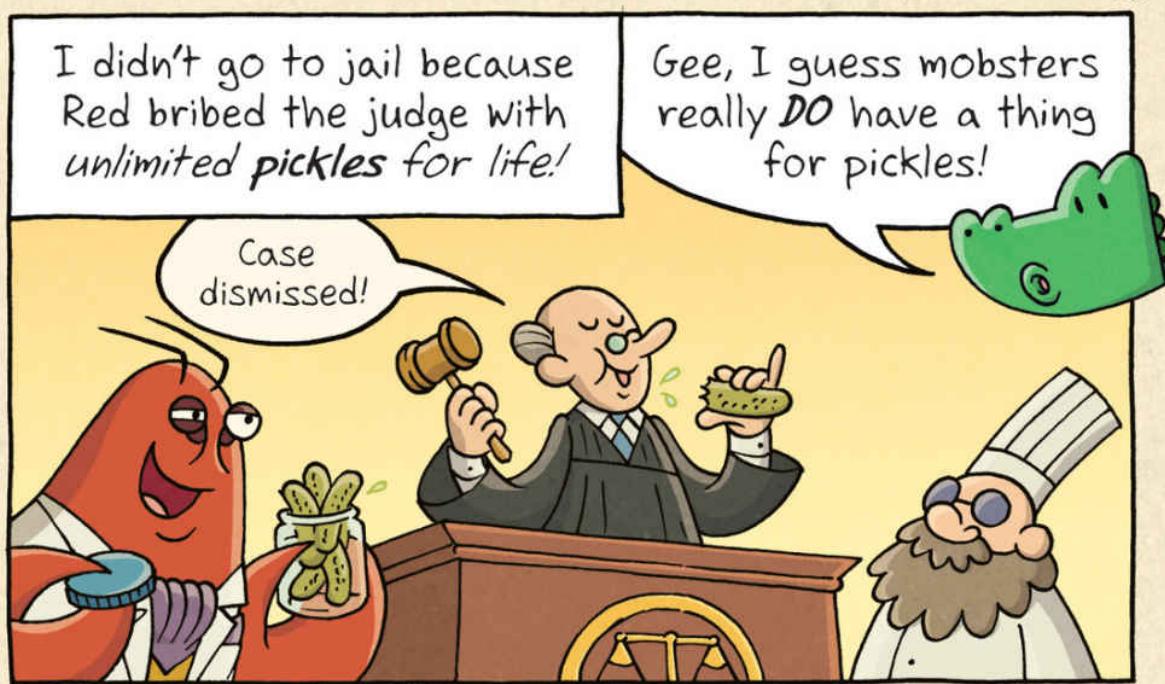


So I cut corners everywhere I could. If I'd cut any **MORE** corners my *saltines* would've been *round*!



With no other option I made a shady deal with Red Mobster. In return for keeping my cracker company afloat, I had to dispose of the mob's **toxic waste**!

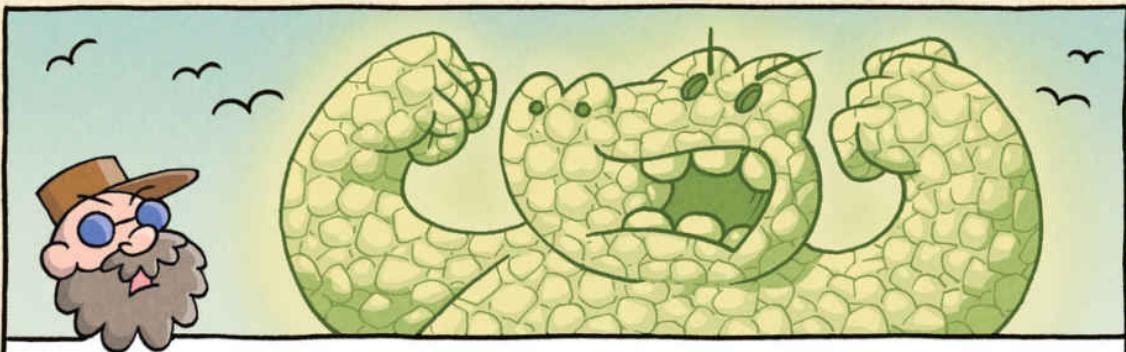




I had no idea your partner survived falling into that **radioactive saltine dough**, much less that he later got turned into a **stone waffle** whose crumbled remains ended up in the dump, only to soak up **EVEN MORE** of Red's toxic waste!



Anjie was a regular, always taking junk off my hands. How was I supposed to know a bunch of **glowing rocks** she found would be so problematic?



This **Rockodile** might be right to hold a grudge. Maybe it is my fault that he turned **into** a monster. But he's the one who chooses to **ACT** like a monster.

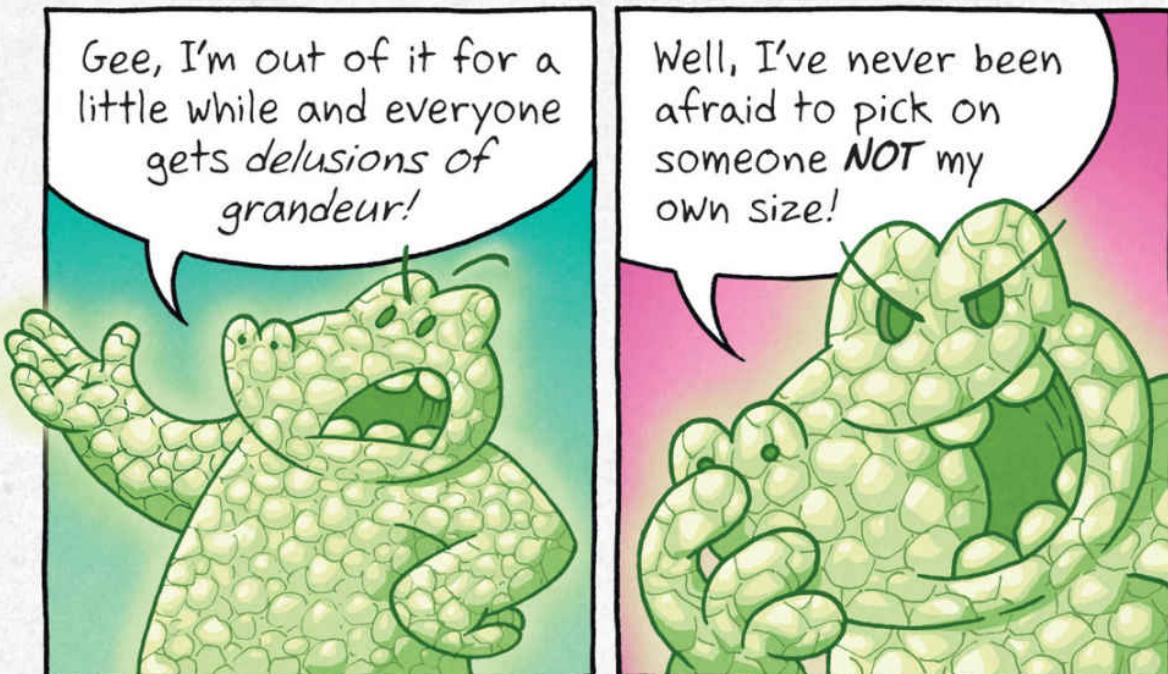
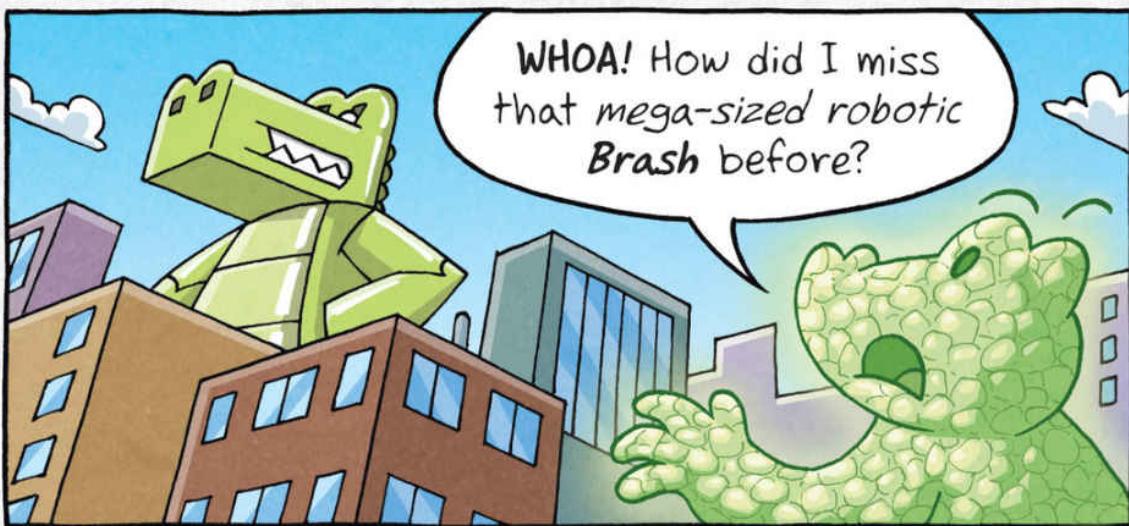
He's right. Saul didn't kidnap anyone. Or flood the city. Or rob a bank. Or form an evil supervillain group. Daryl's the one who committed those crimes.

That doesn't mean *you're* getting off scot-free, though!

You can learn a lot about someone going through their garbage. And Red has *PLENTY* of it! I'll tell you *everything else* I know, if I can stay out of prison!

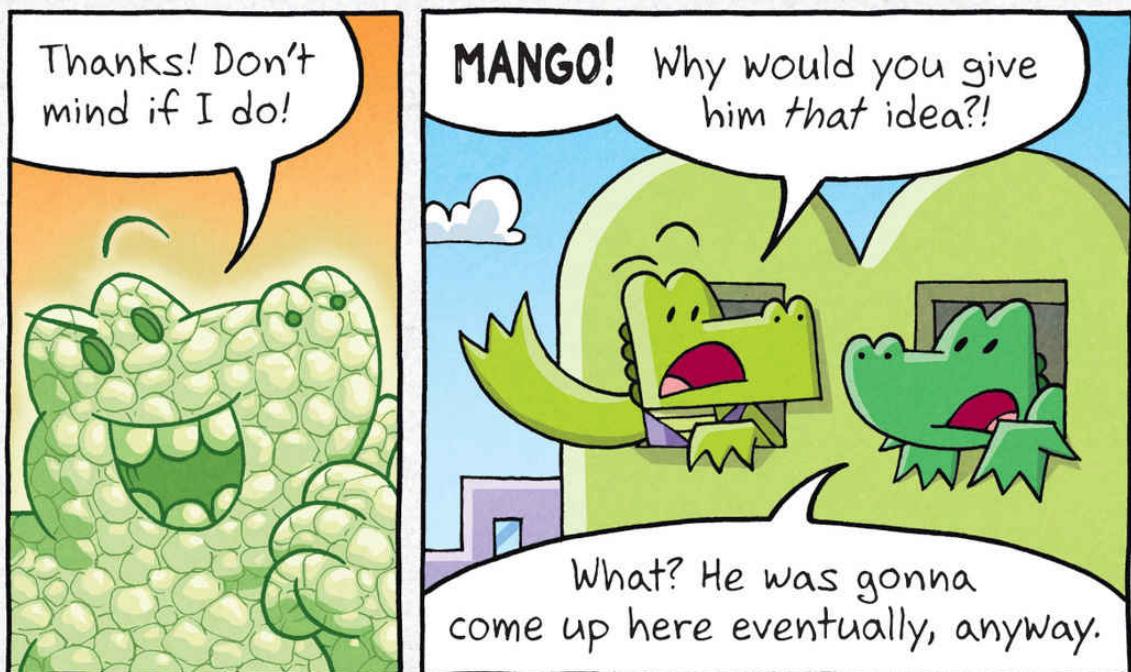
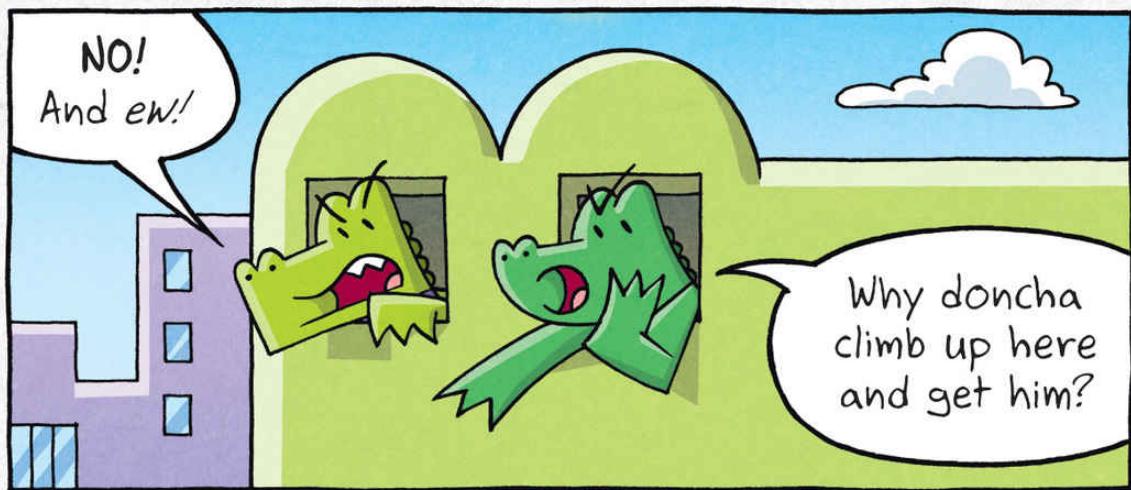
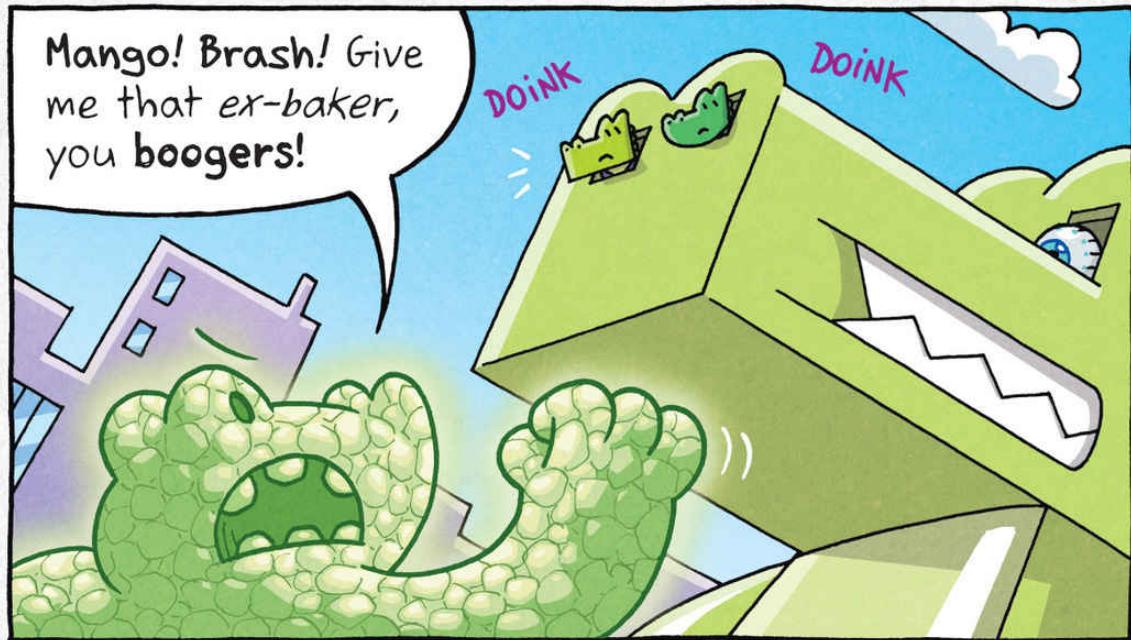
STAY OUT OF PRISON?
With Rockodile after us, we'll be lucky to stay **ALIVE!**

Daryl's obsessed. Even if he manages to destroy everyone he blames for his predicament, his **stone-cold thirst** for revenge may **NEVER** be quenched!

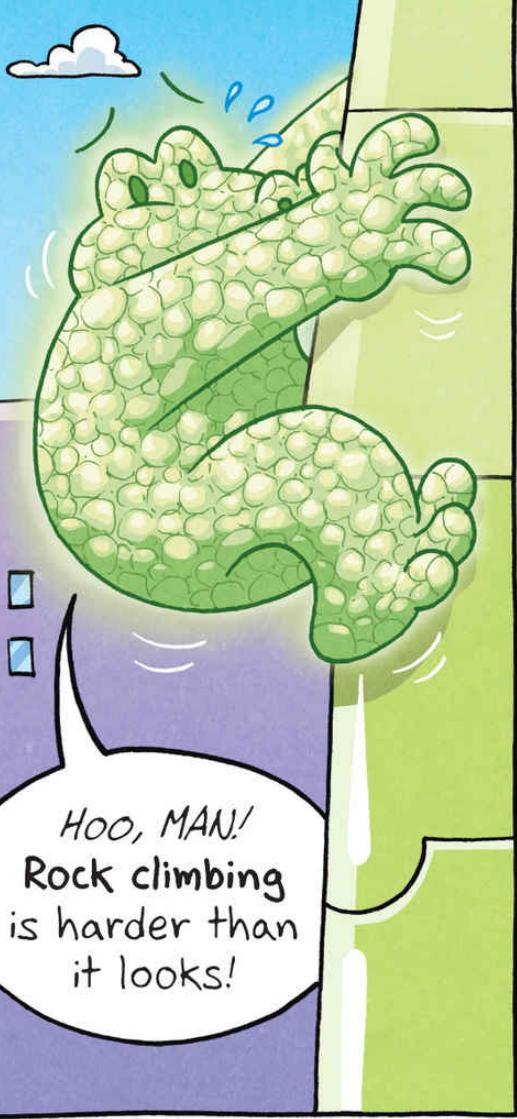
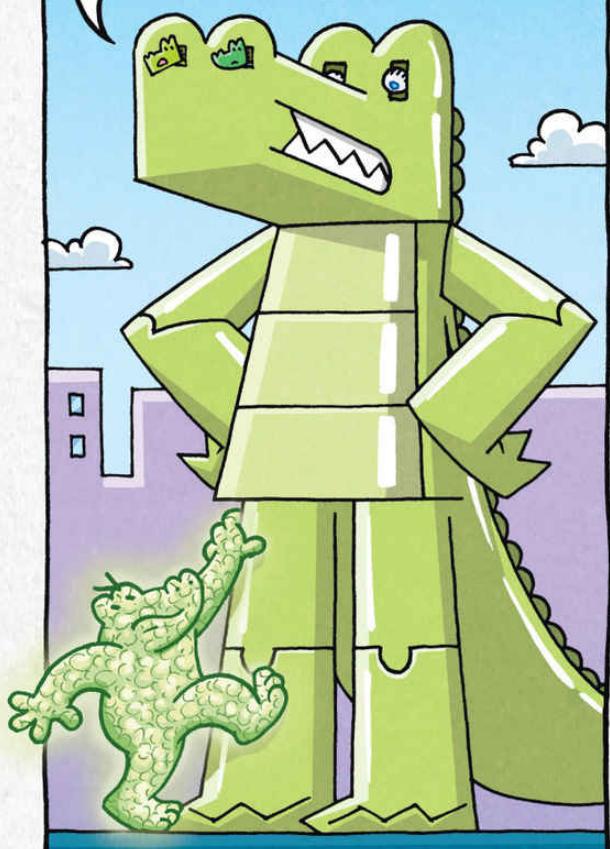


Chapter 17





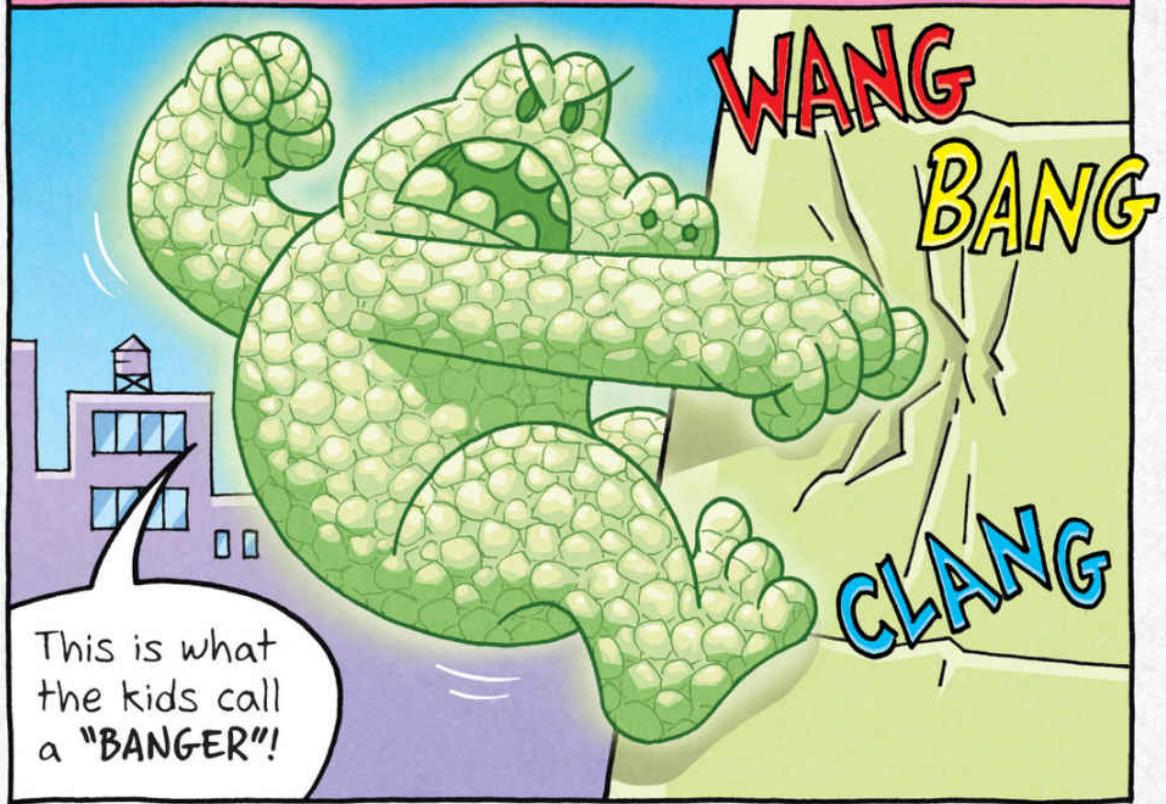
I just hope we can distract him long enough for the scientists to finish their laser!



Maybe it's time for a little **ROCK MUSIC!**



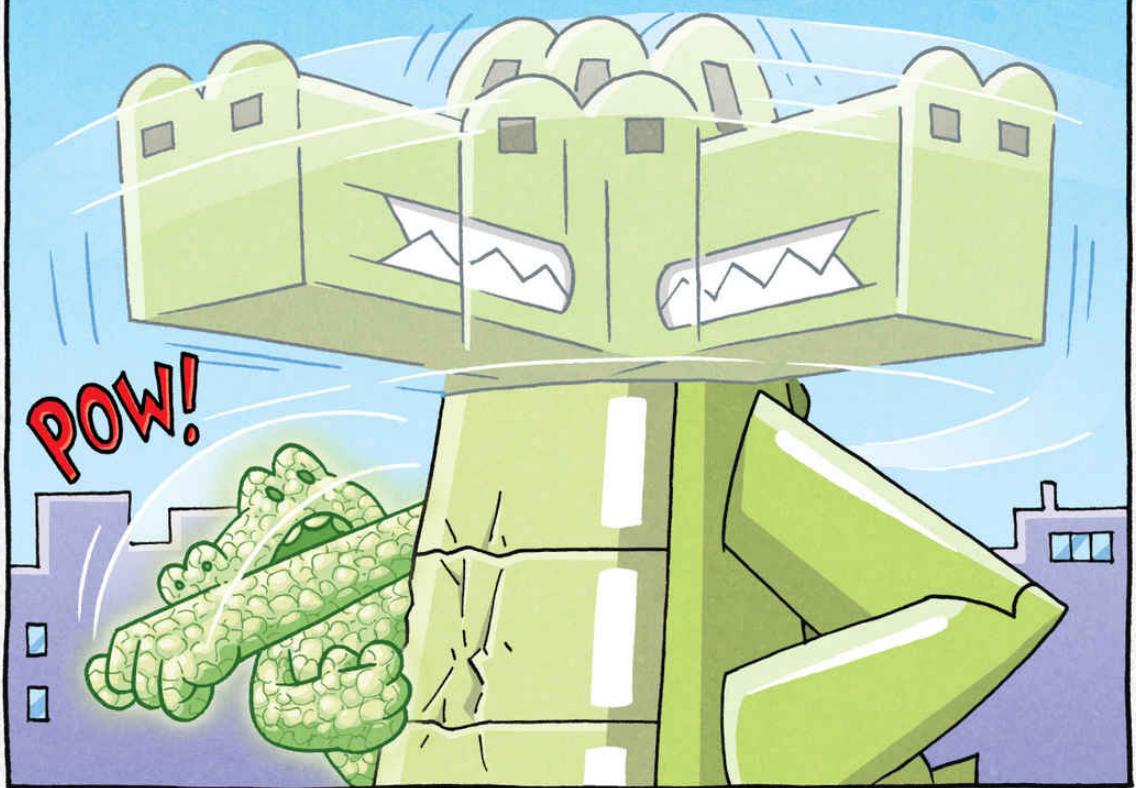
♪♪ The Gators can't stand these hits for long! ♪



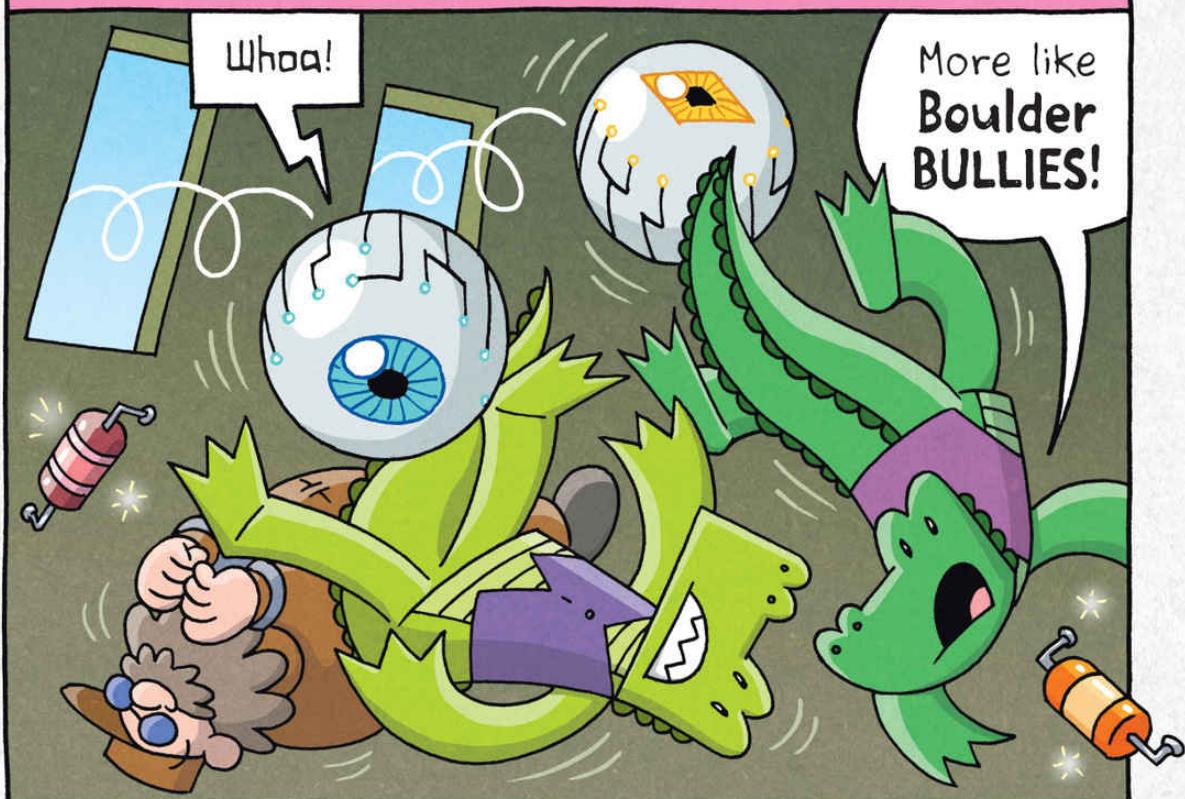
♩ So this montage sings a sad, sad song! ♩

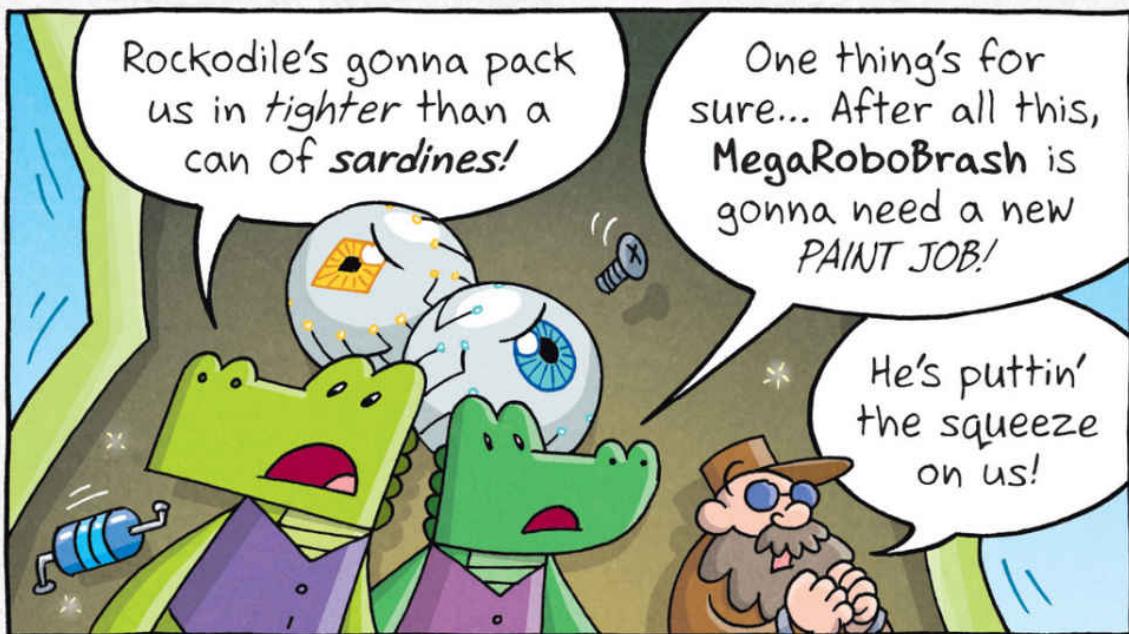
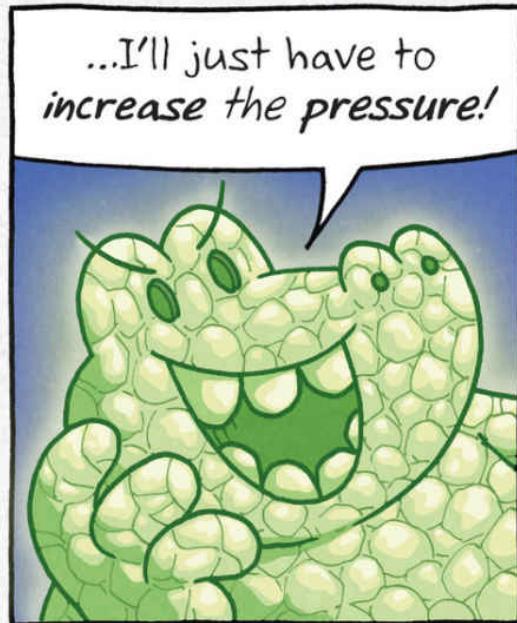
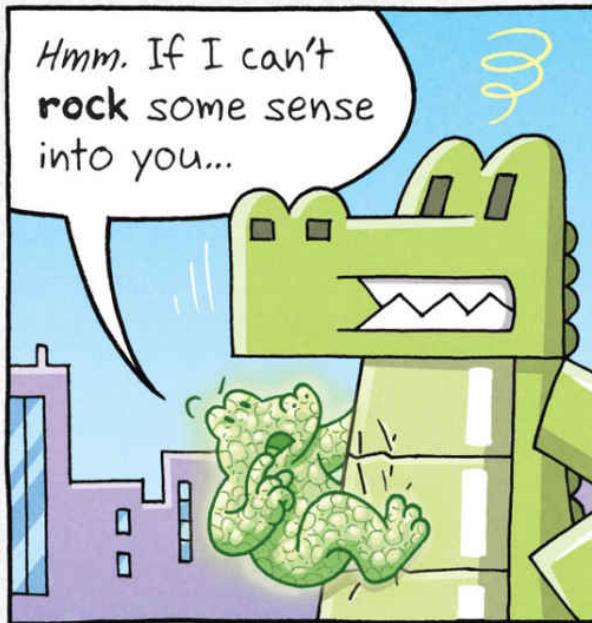


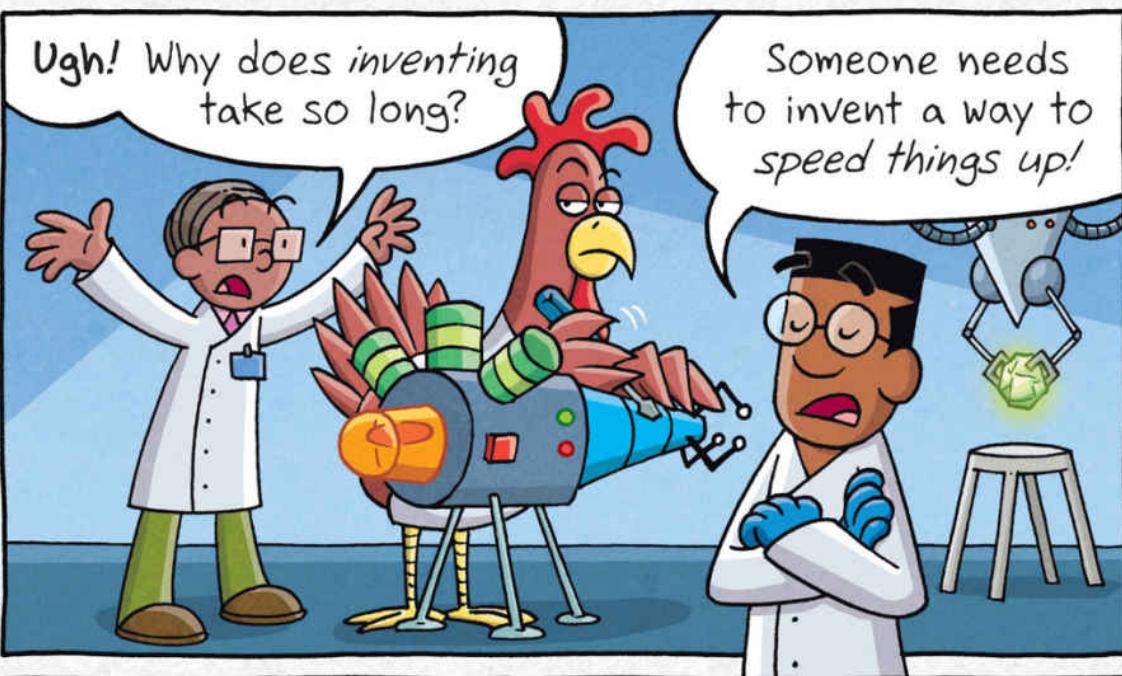
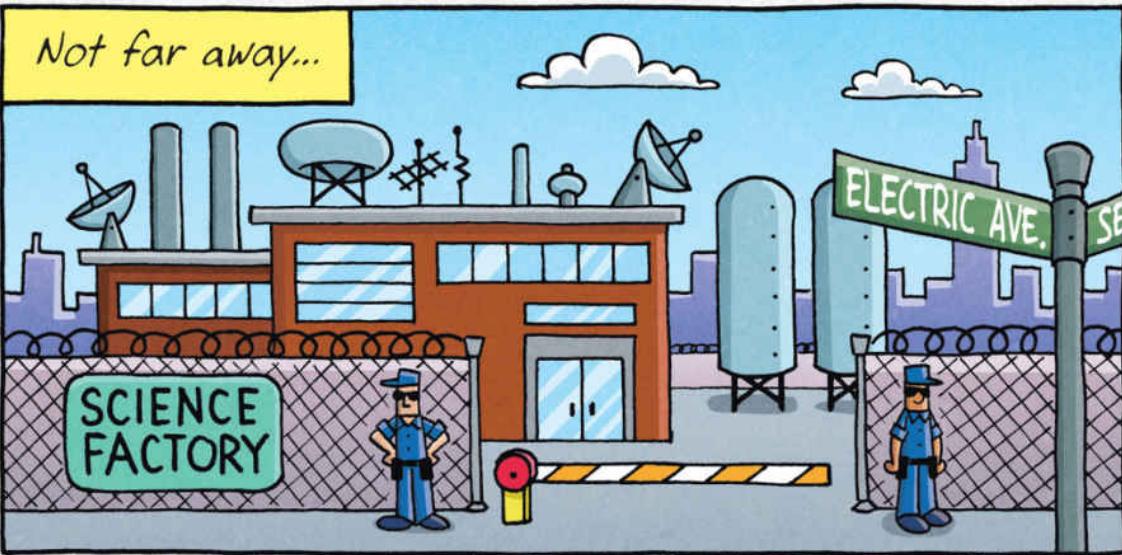
♪ ♪ These Boulder Buddies pack quite a punch! ♪ ♪



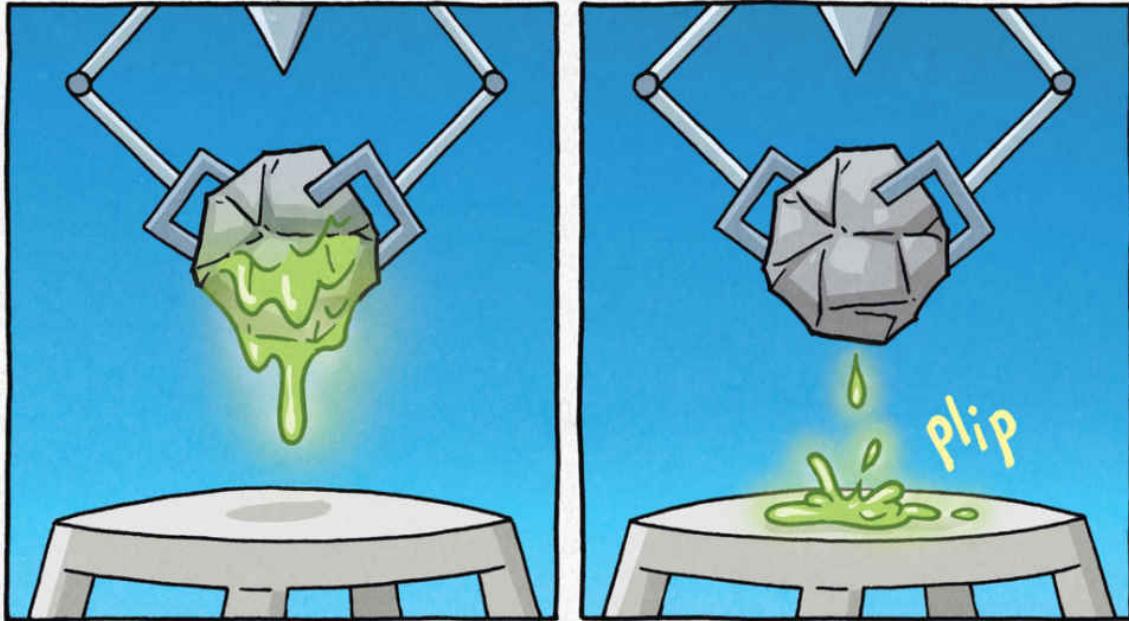
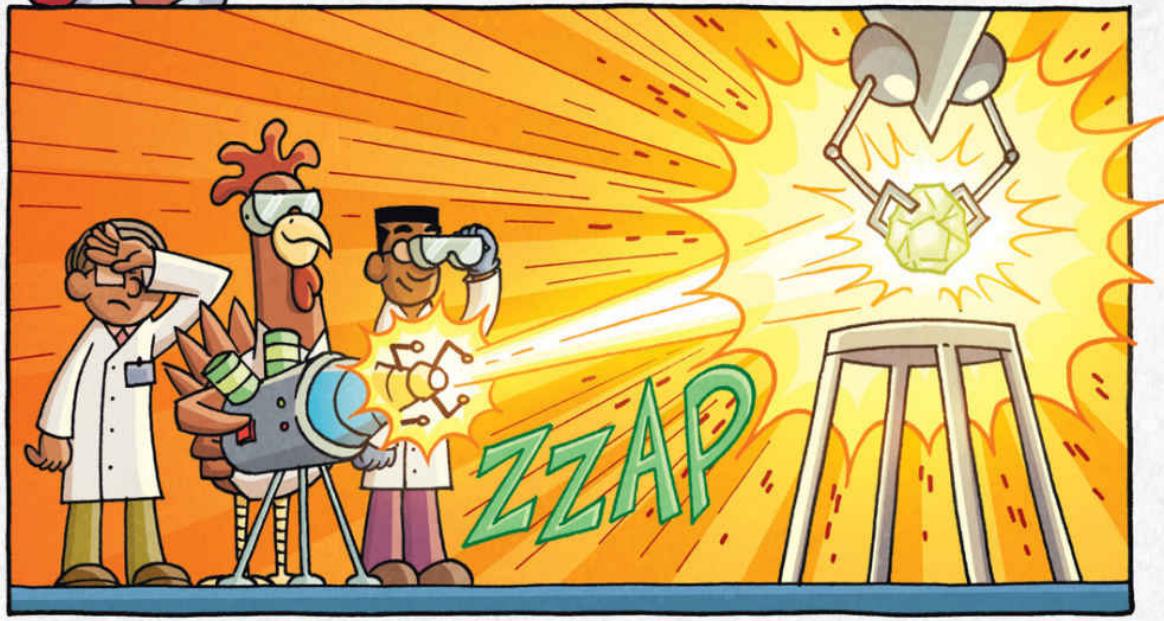
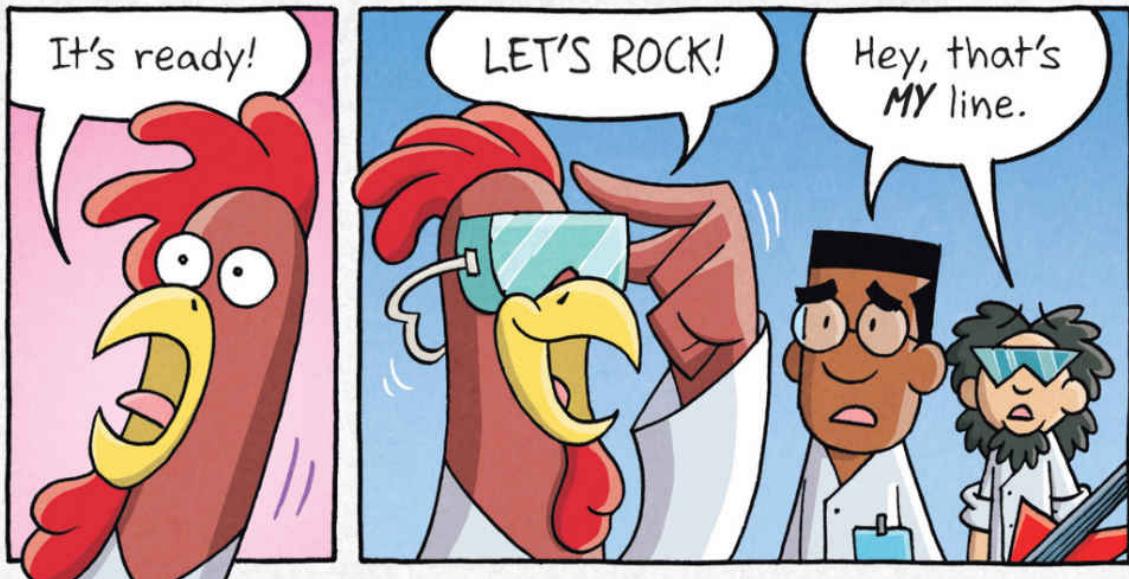
♪ ♪ And if they could, they'd steal your lunch! ♪ ♪

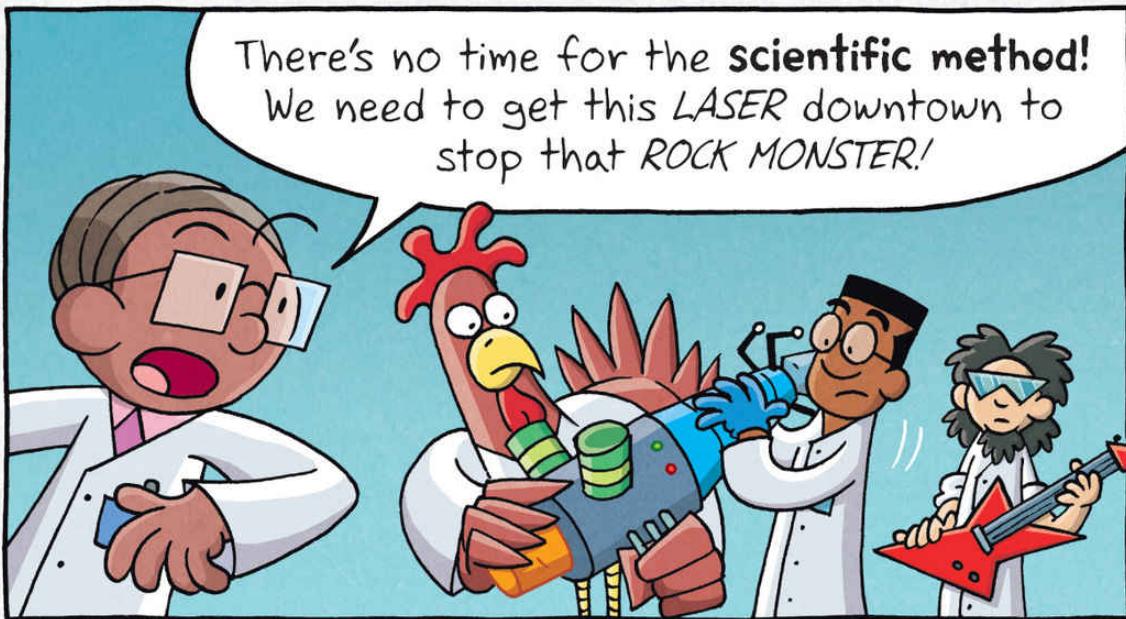
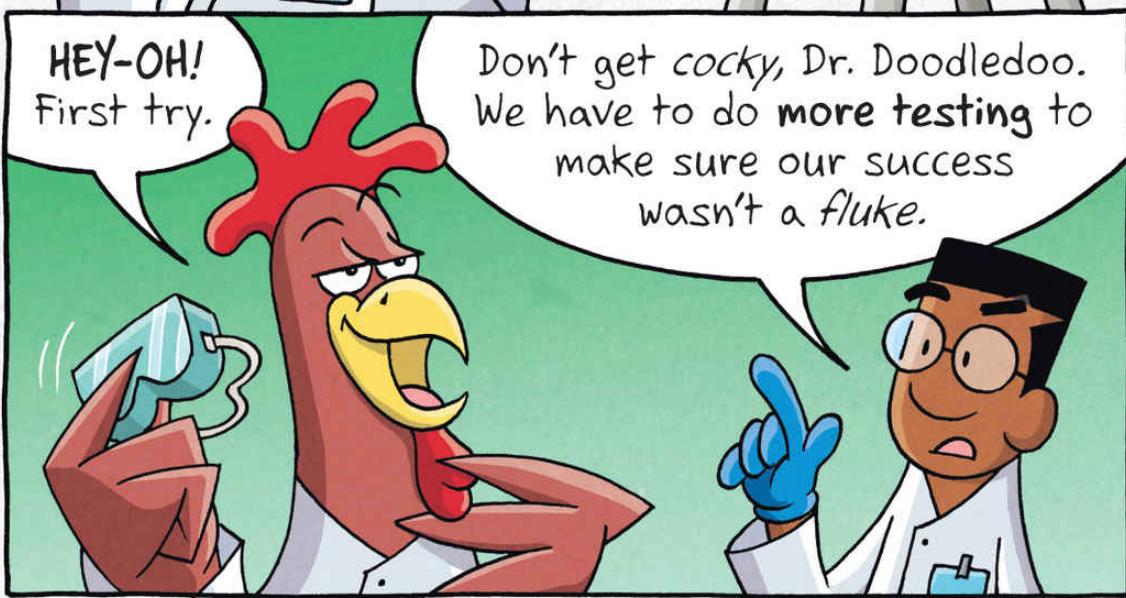
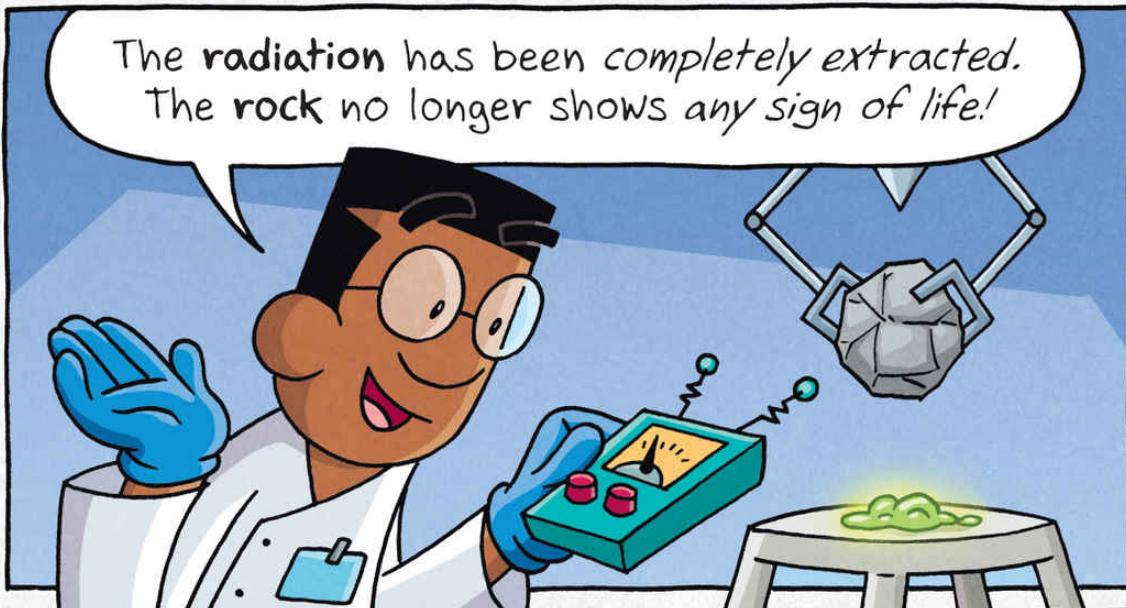


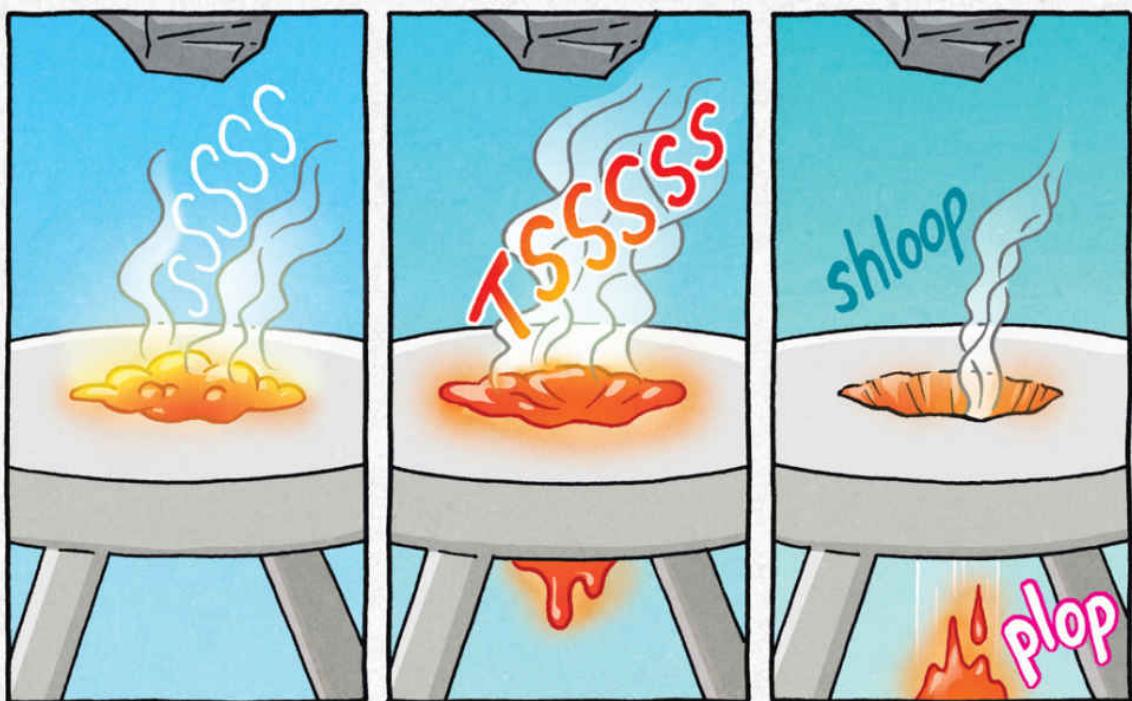
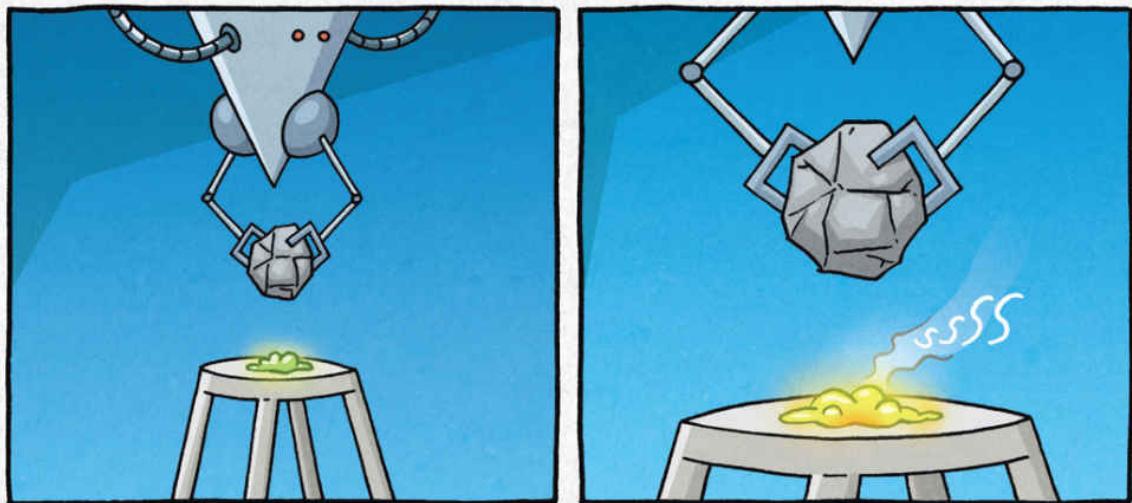




*Any song can be speed metal if you play it fast enough!

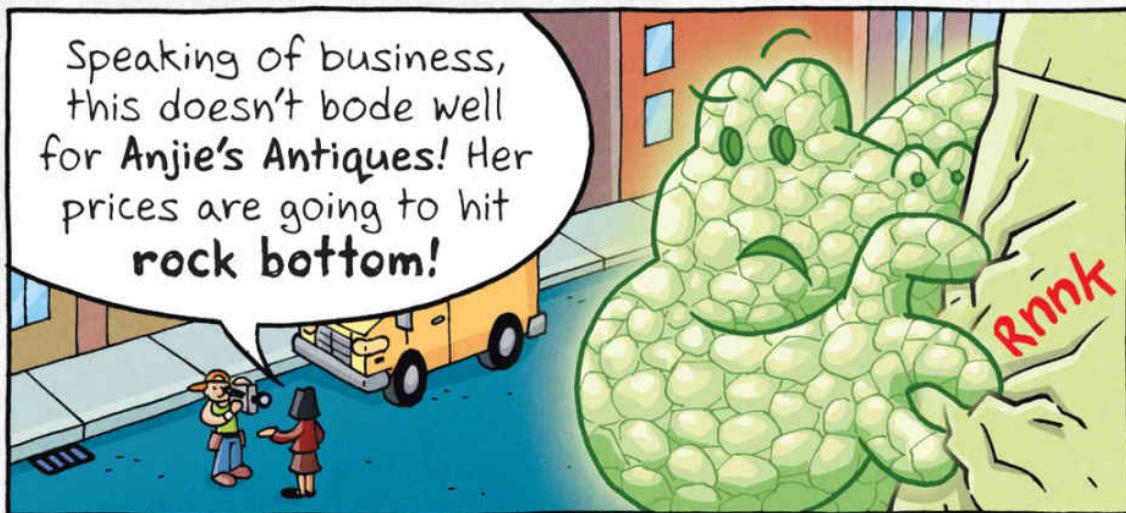


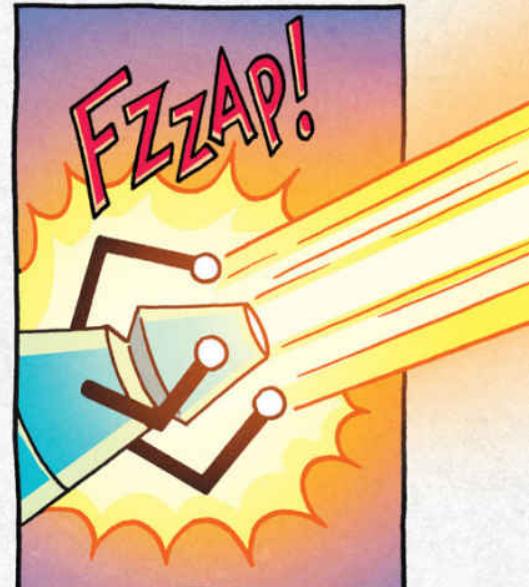
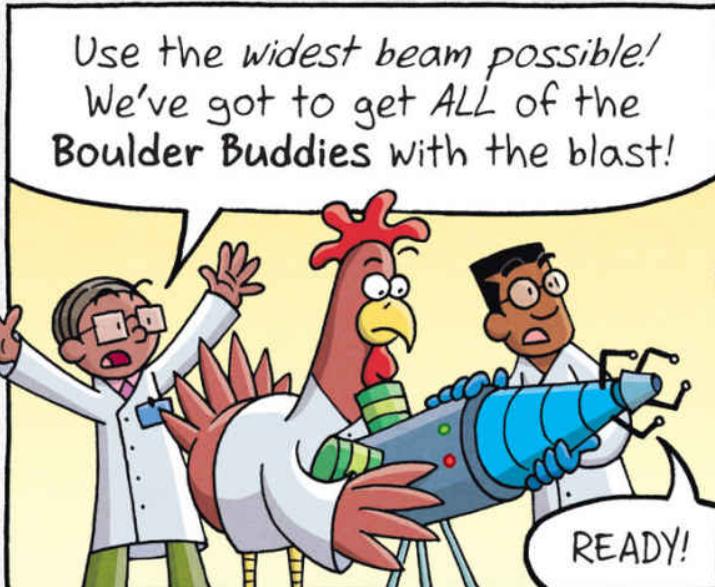


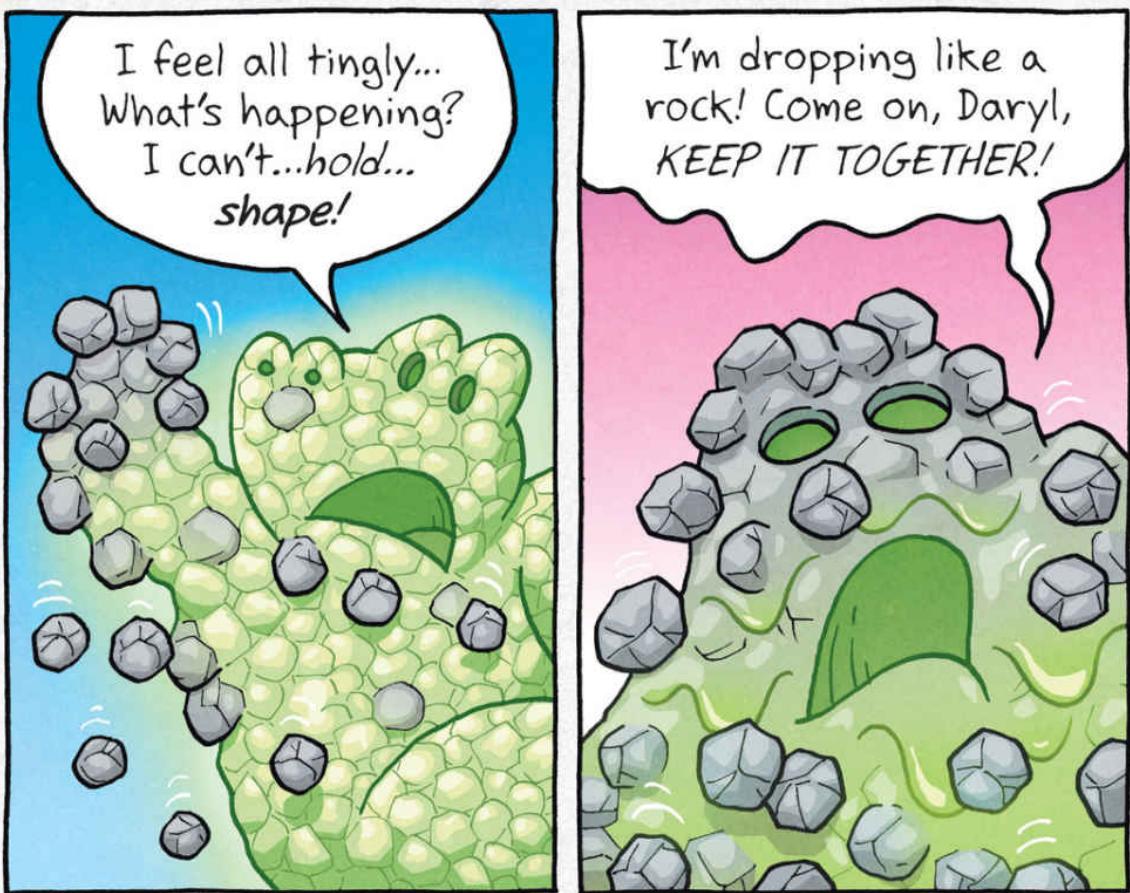
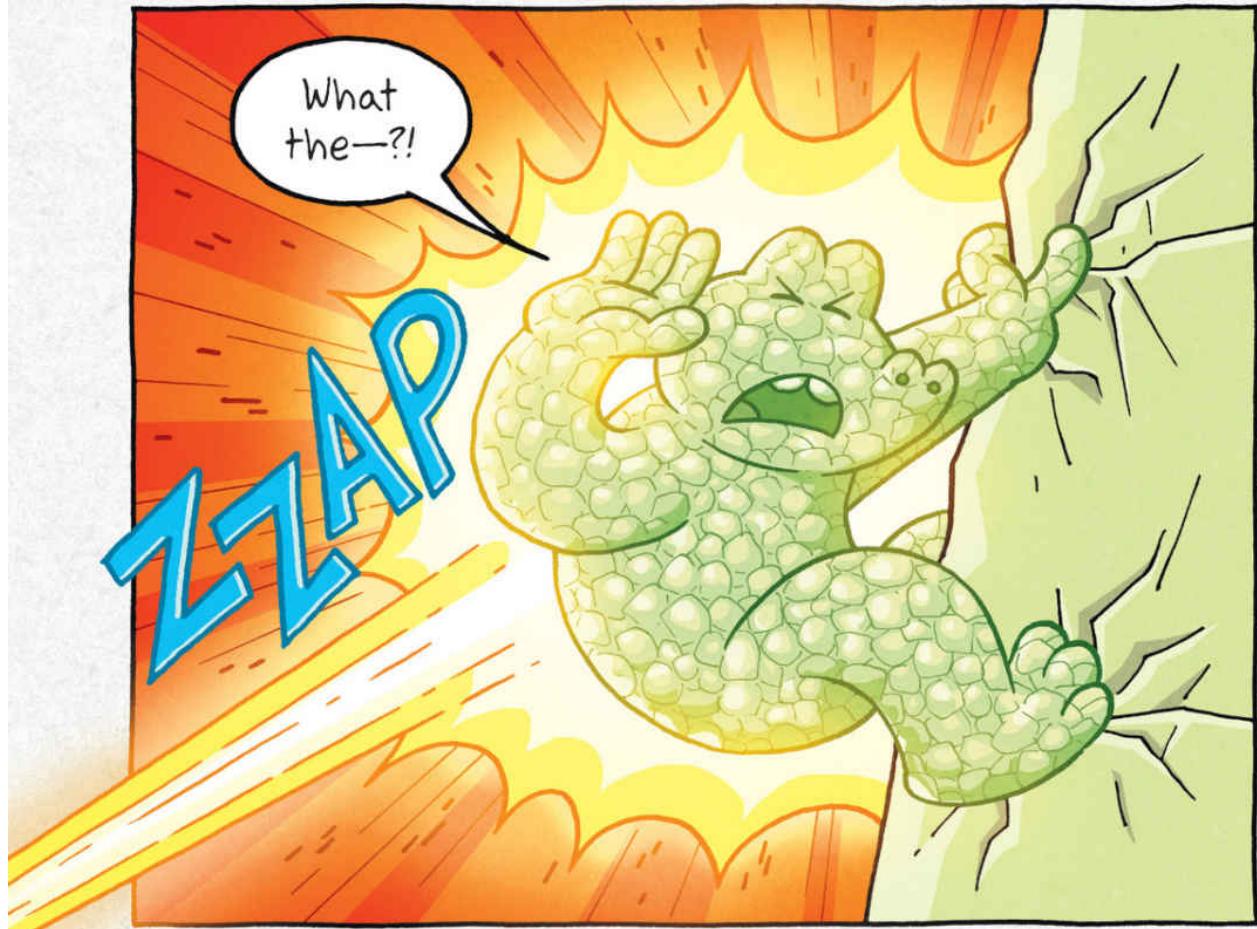


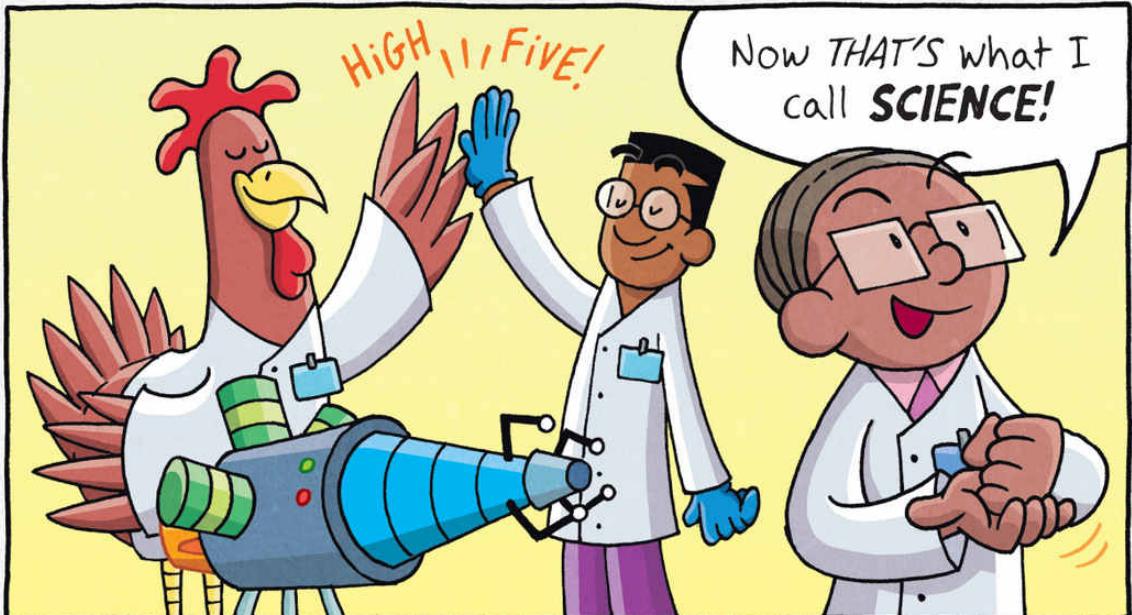
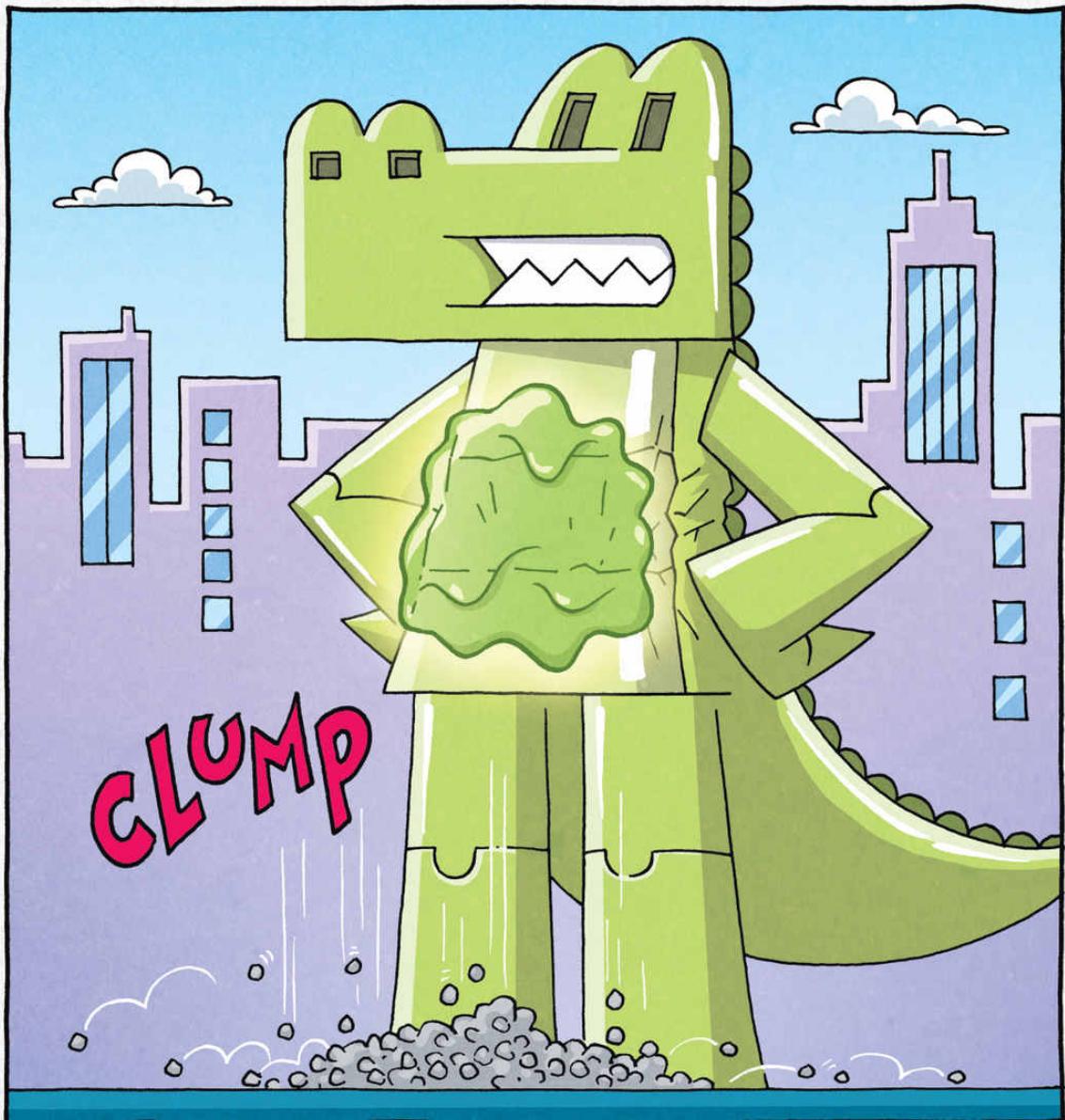
Chapter 18

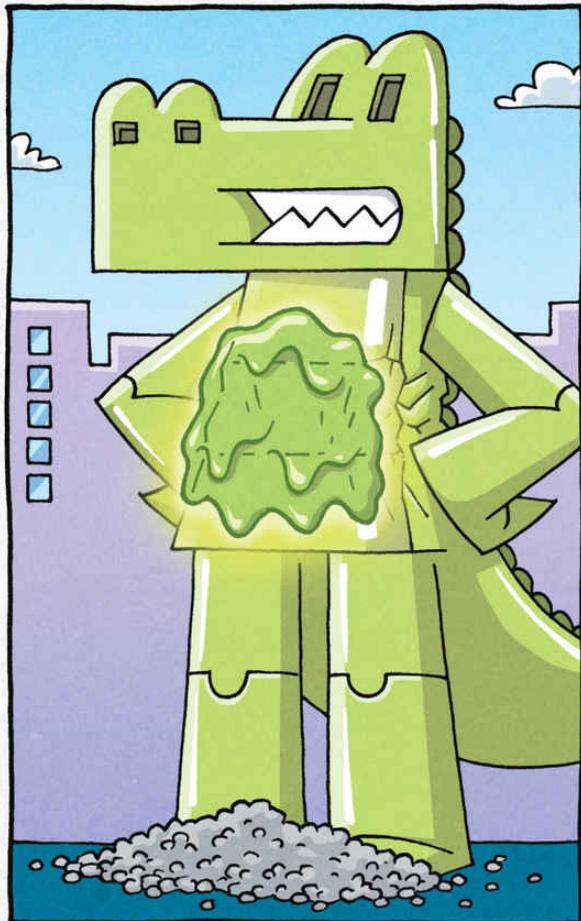
This is Cici Boringstories, reporting for Action News Now. For viewers just tuning in, the Boulder Buddies have all combined into a giant monster called **ROCKODILE!**











GATORS! The Boulder Buddies are no longer alive! They've fallen away and all that's left is radioactive goo.



That's great, doctor! Wait—radioactive goo?



I'm pure radioactive goo!
I'm... **RADIOACTIDILE!**



Eh, name's a downgrade,
but I'm HOTTER
THAN EVER!

TSSSSSS

OH, NO! The radioactive goo left over
from the rocks has concentrated into
a superheated living **BLOB!**

THIS is why we
do more testing!

GATORS! The radioactive goo is still alive! And now the heat it's creating is going to melt right through the giant robot's *METAL EXTERIOR!*

Man, how'd I even end up in this mess?



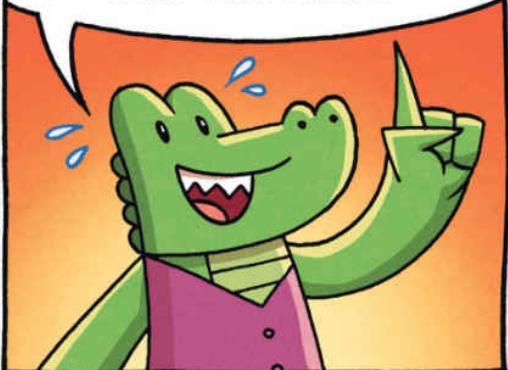
We've got to get **Radioactidile** to chill out before he cooks us like a *TV dinner!*

Anyone have any ideas? D-ORB? C-ORB?



Wait—C... Sea! **SEA-WATER** will cool off the radiation. We can march MegaRoboBrash into the *river!*

Most of MegaRoboBrash's circuits were removed to make space for us to live in here. We'll have to control the legs *manually!*

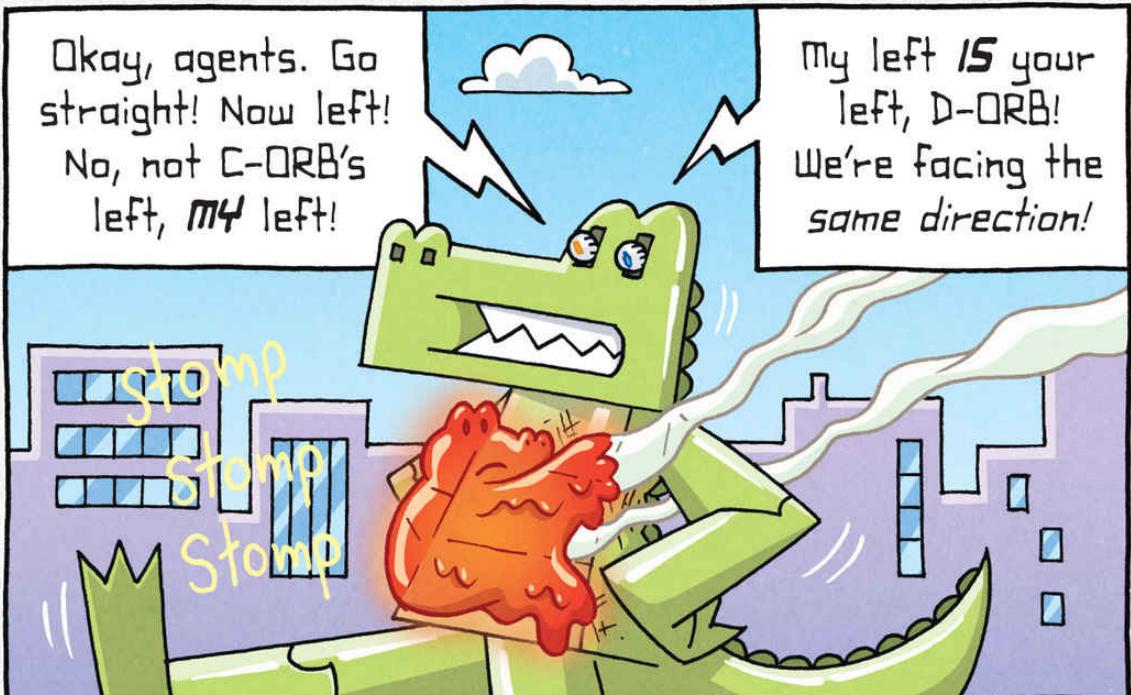
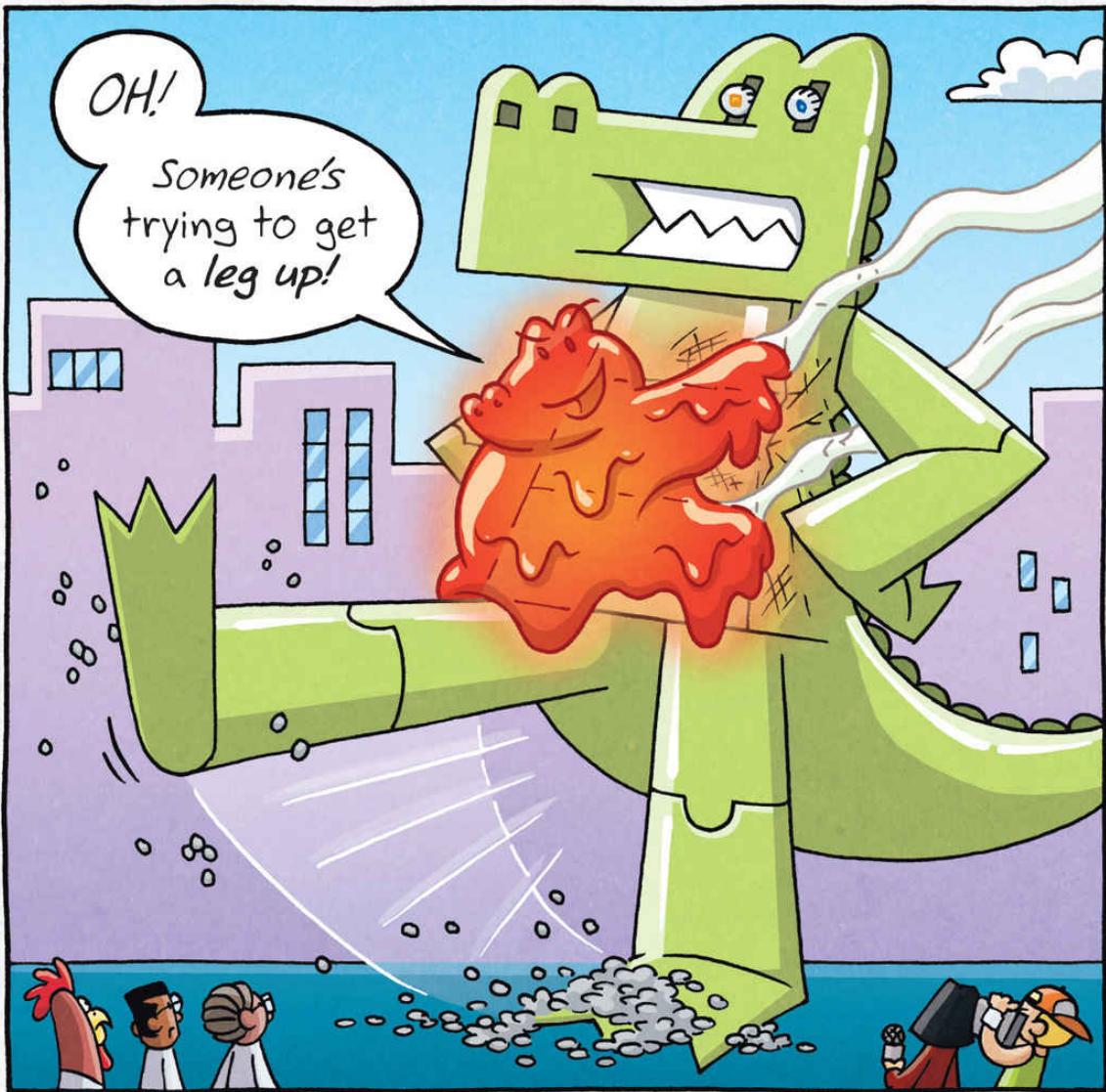


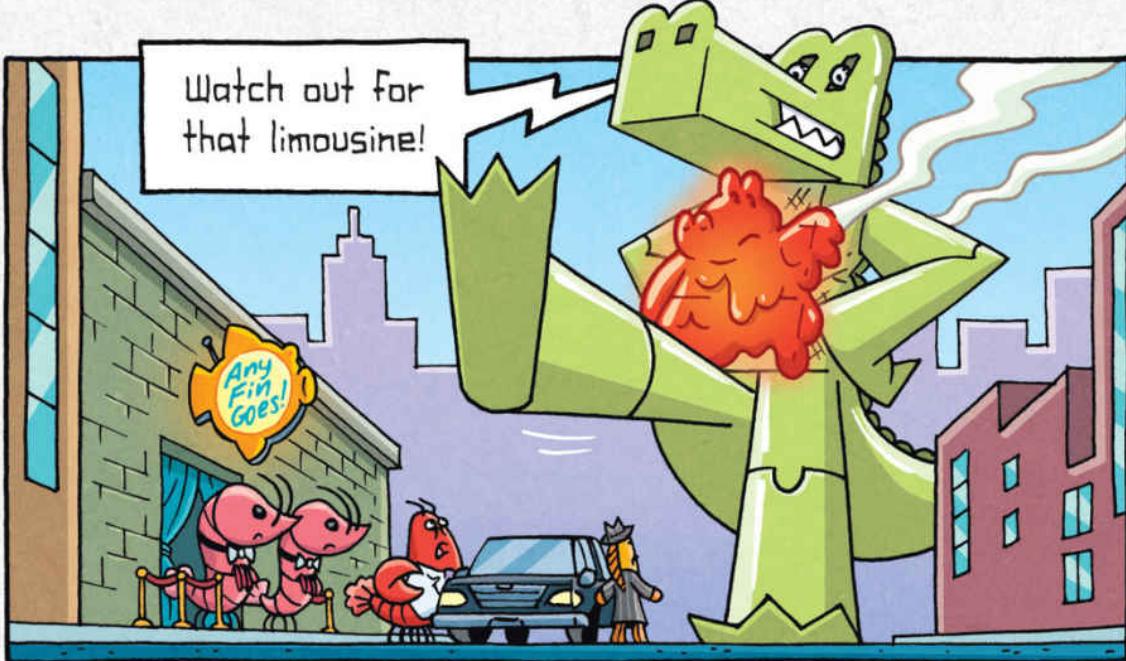
Mango, you get the right leg, I've got the *left!*

ORB units! You two watch where we're going!

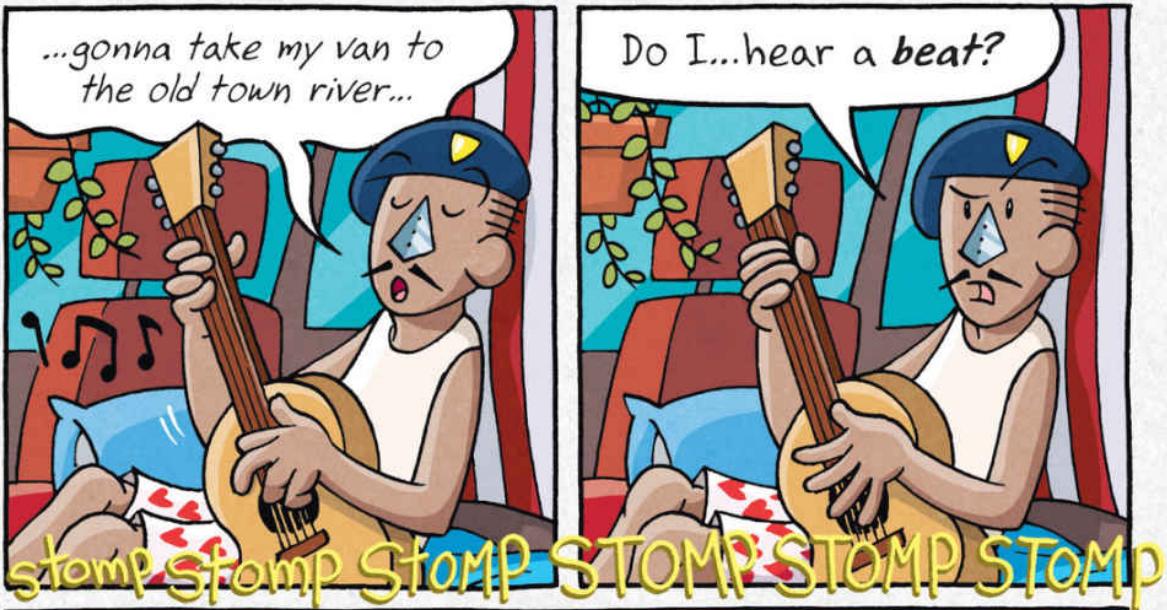
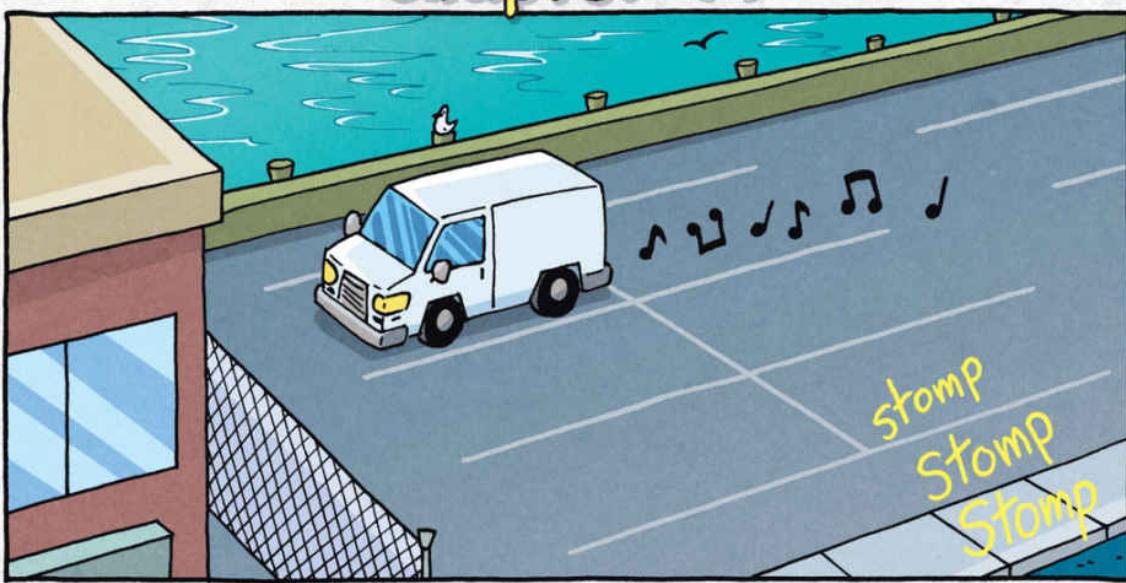
Aye aye!

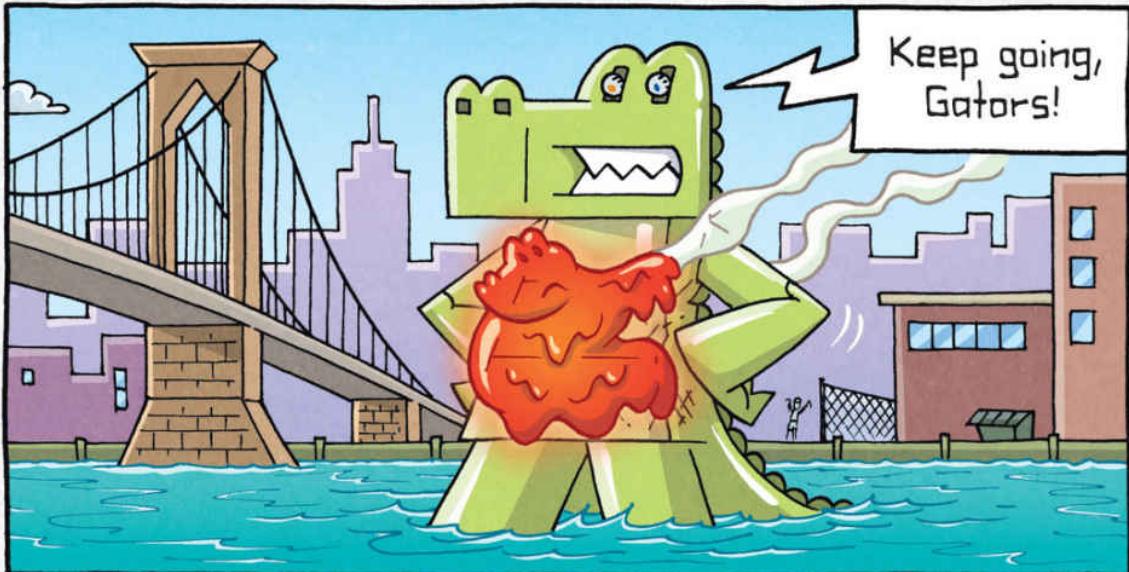
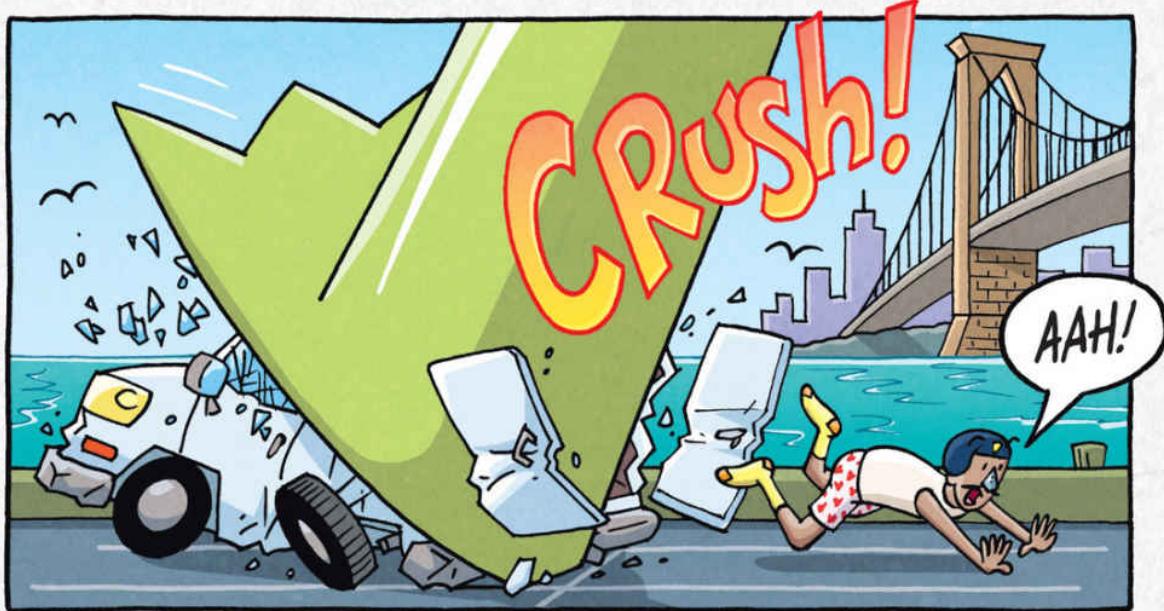


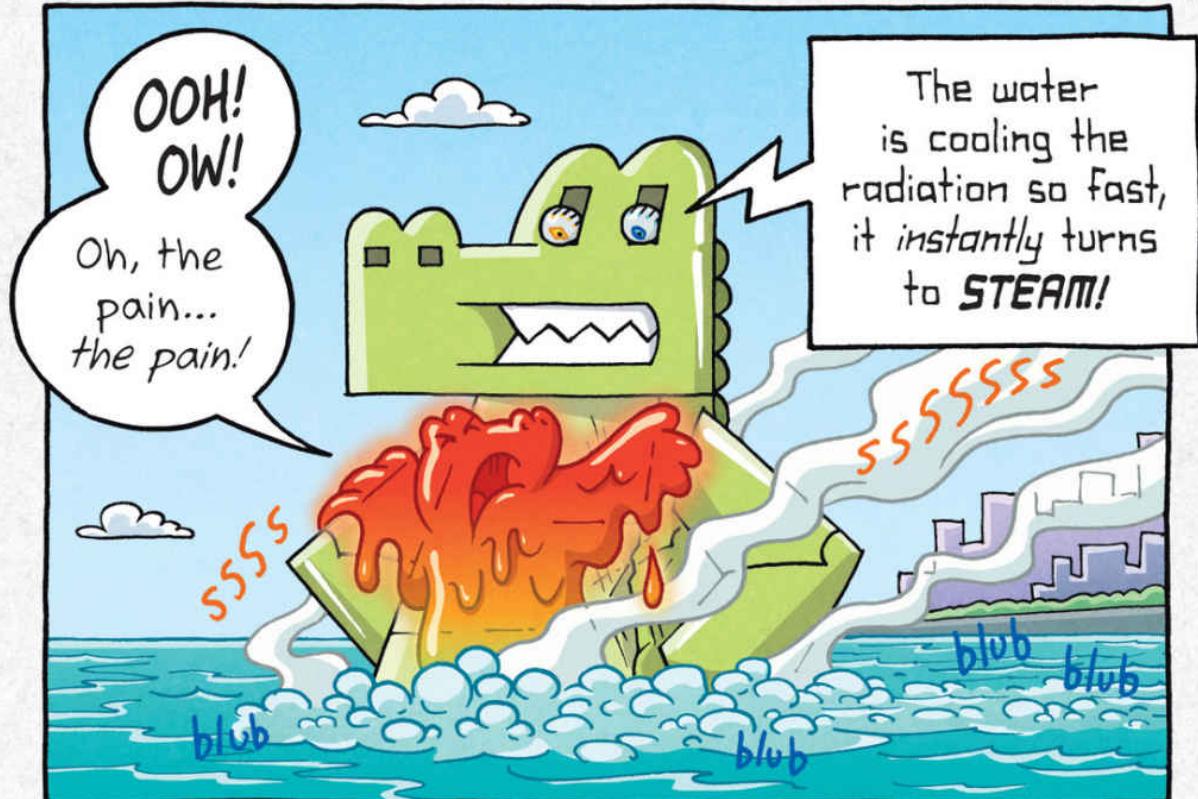
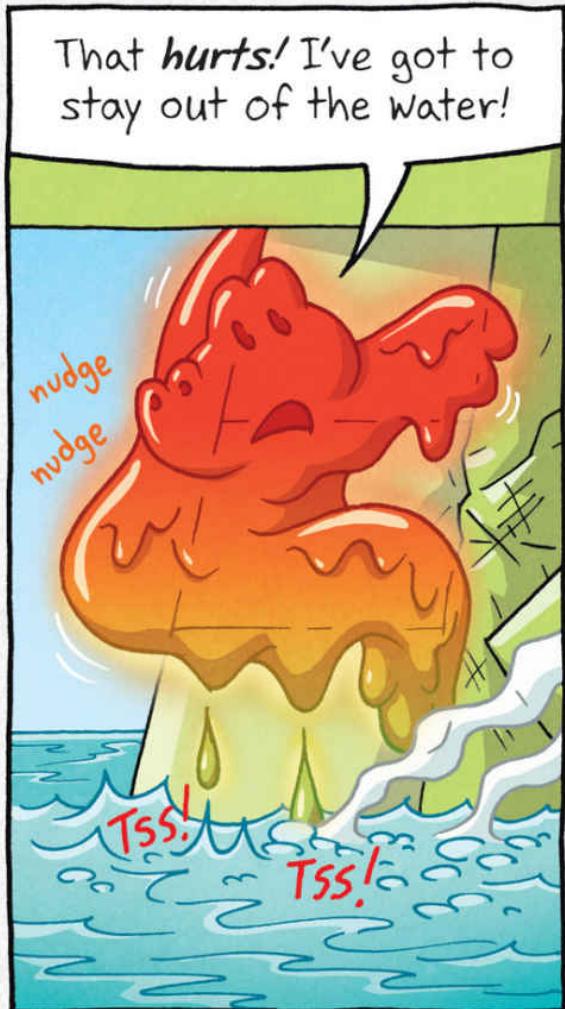




Chapter 19







It's working, agents! Radioactidile is being **evaporated**!

Superheated
by a supervillain!

But as a result, he's
SUPERHEATING the
water all around us!

Just keep cranking, Mango! The farther we get from shore, the deeper the water will be, which means the more of Radioactidile will get *turned into vapor*!

I—I can't
climb fast
enough!

This was easier...when I was
a **rock** monster...and not...a
gelatinous goo monster!

SURGE

These legs...are getting
harder...and harder...
to move!

That's because
MegaRoboBrash is
taking on water.
LOOK!

HUMIDITY

Great. No need to
keep walking. Now
we're sinking!

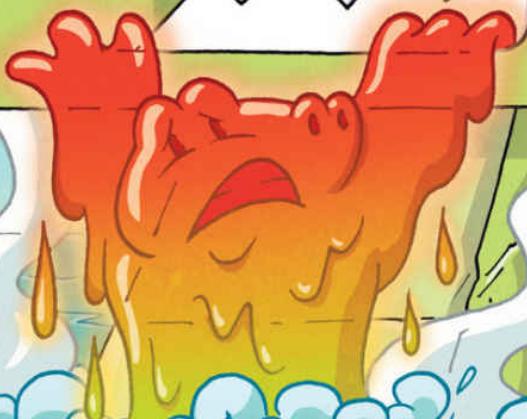
If we stay in here, we'll
be **boiled alive** like lobsters!
Or frogs! Or alligators inside
a larger metal alligator!

Quick!

Everyone get out
onto the snout!

GAHHH!

Must get...
to top...while
there's still...
any of...OW...
myself left!



What now? With the water boiling, we can't swim away. We'd need an **escape boat** to save this **scapegoat**!



And any second now, **Radioactidile** is gonna get us!



I'm—**ARGH!**—gonna—**YEOWCH!**—get you...in a sec!

Get on top of C-ORB and D-ORB! They can carry you to shore.

Good idea, Brash—but wait! There's not enough room for **THREE** of us!



Forget about me, Mango! You've got to take Saul so that you can put Red Mobster away!



I—I'll send C-ORB back for you!

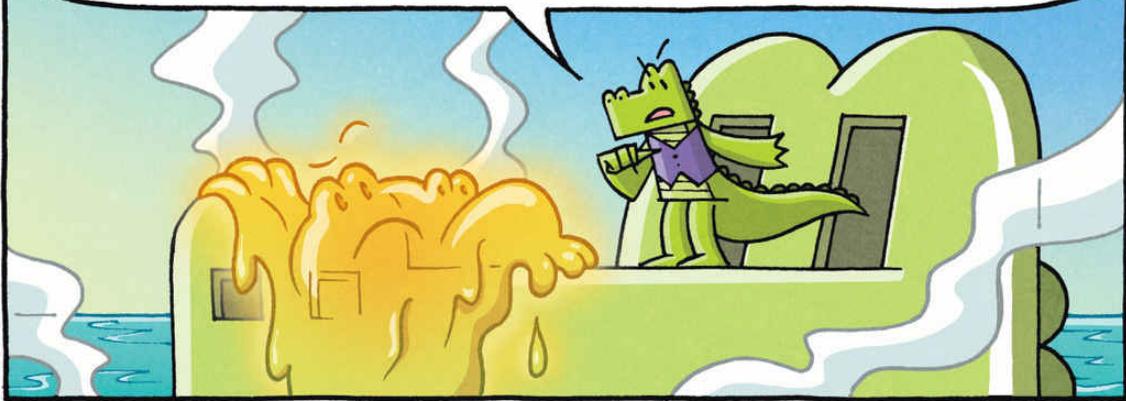
It's too far, and I'm sinking too fast for you to make it back in time. Save yourself! GO!

NOOOOO!!!! Now I'll never get my revenge against Saul T. Byproducts!

BRASH!



Sorry, Daryl, you'll just have to settle for revenge against **ME**. Isn't that what you always wanted?



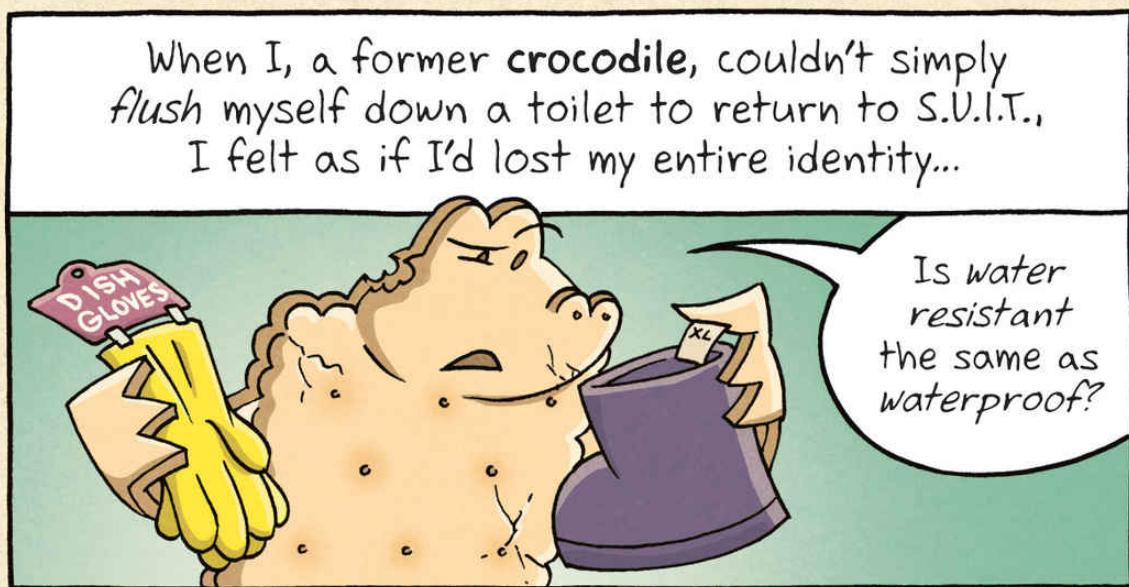
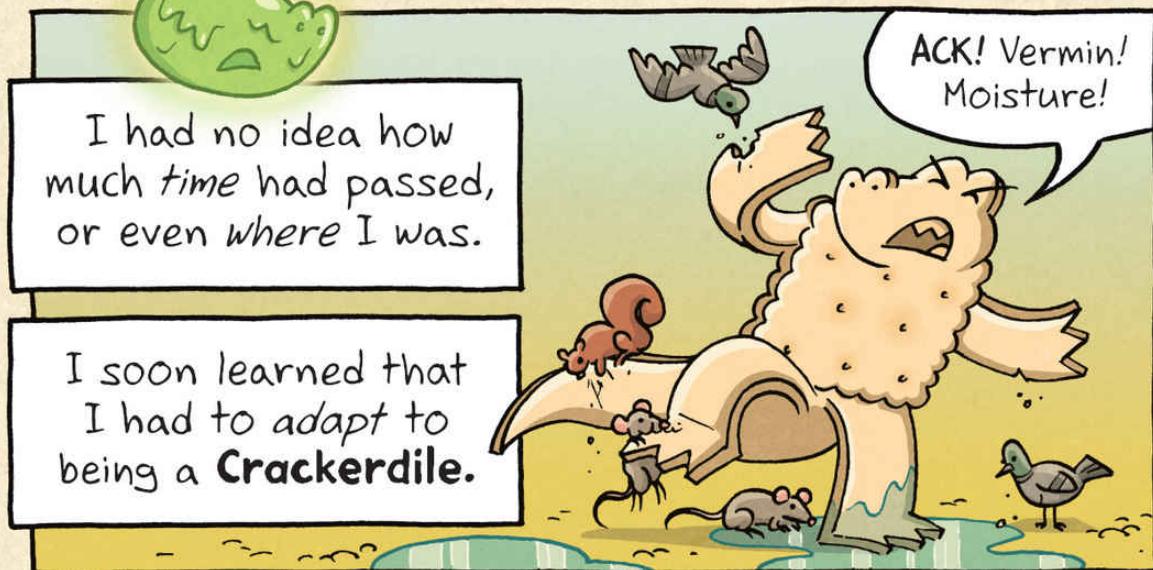
WANTED? This...this isn't what I wanted. I...I just wanted to be **UNDERSTOOD**...and not **FORGOTTEN**...
But this **toxic radiation** made me so **ANGRY!!!**



At first, I was **ANGRY** you didn't check to see if I survived that cracker factory accident...

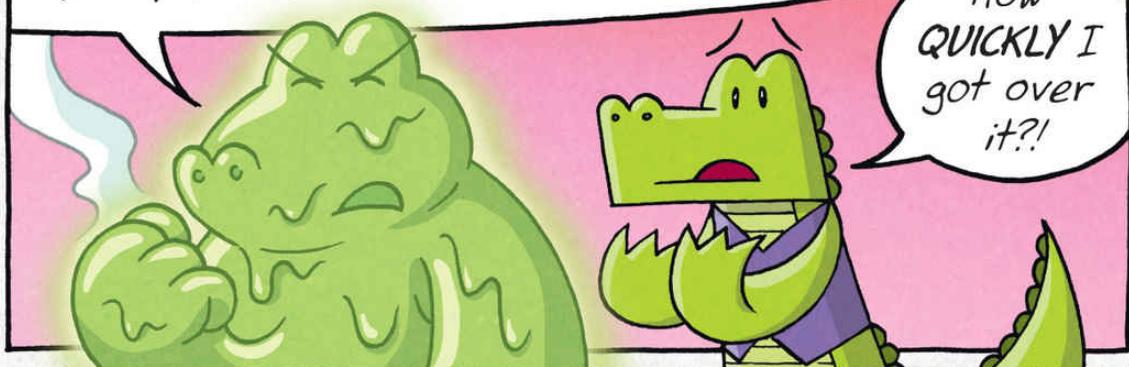
Um, Brash? It's me, Daryl. Still alive...
Just a **cracker**, apparently.





And then...**JEALOUSY** took over.

I...I didn't mean to become a supervillain. But my life—and my crumby body—were crumbling all around me! And I became filled with RAGE. So I blamed YOU for what happened to me when I saw how quickly you got over it.



I NEVER got over it! Have you read ANY of these books? I'm a mess! And now I'm losing you for the fourth or fifth time... I'VE HONESTLY LOST COUNT!



We can't keep going on like this, Daryl! What could you even turn into after THIS? IT BOGLES THE MIND!!!



You...You're right, Brash. This **TOXIC WASTE** inside me kept me alive, but also kept me from seeing the truth...



I've been wrong all along. I only wish...I'd realized it before **dooming** us both. I am so sorry, Brash. Can you ever... forgive me?



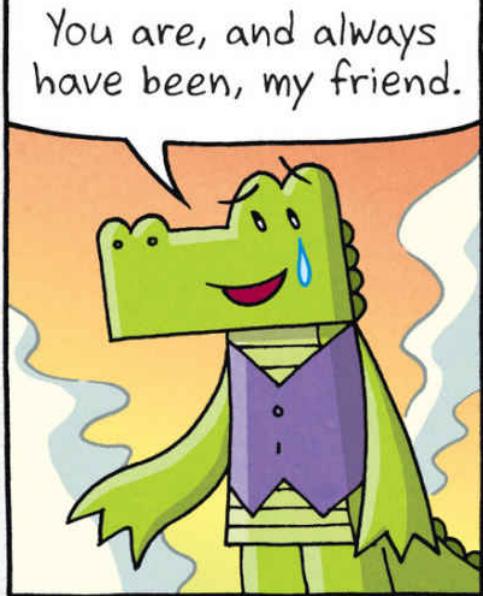
I forgive you, Daryl. And I've forgiven myself for what happened, too. I'm ready to accept my fate. I hope you're ready to accept yours.

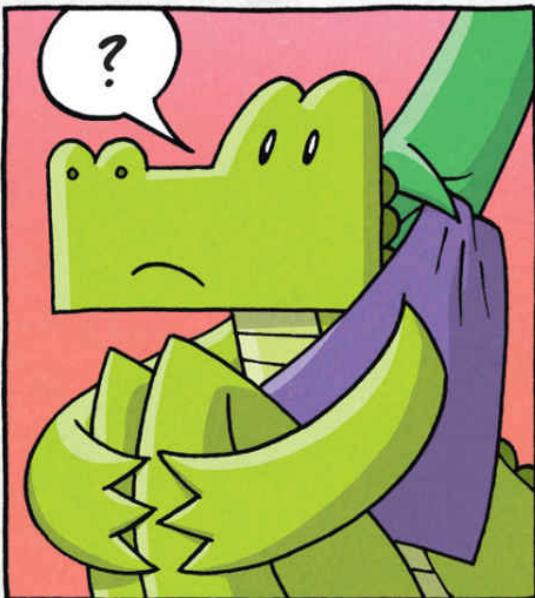
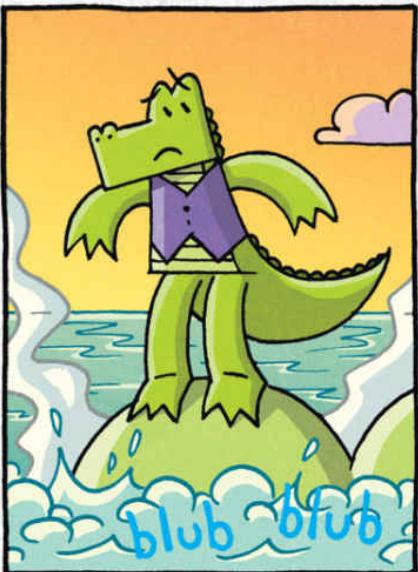
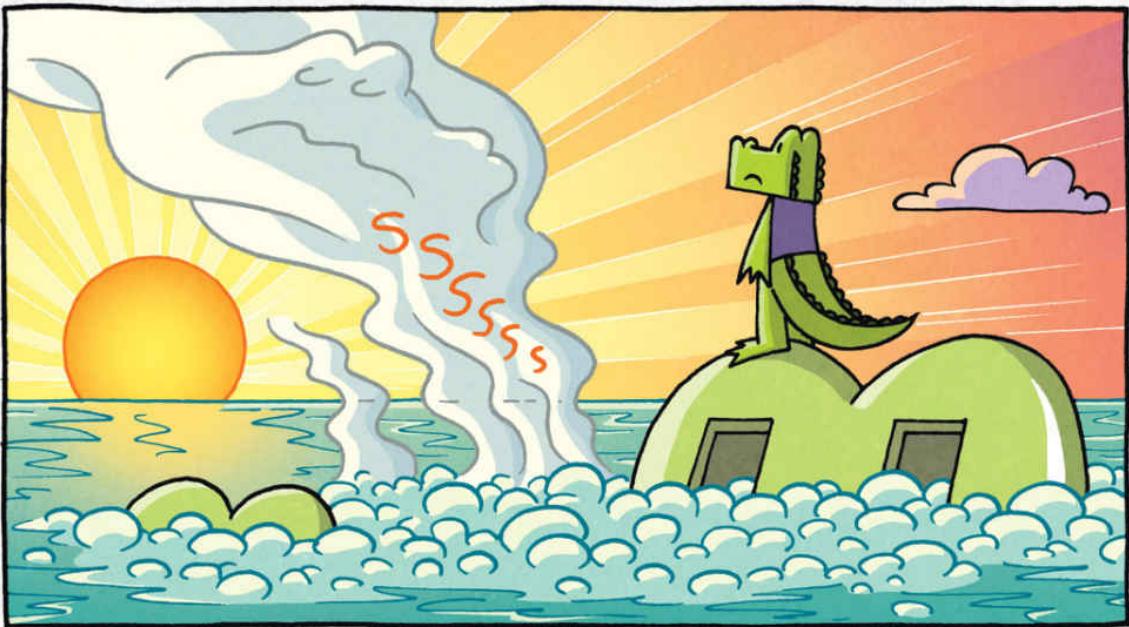


I am glad you are here with me. **OW!** Here at the end of all things, Brash.

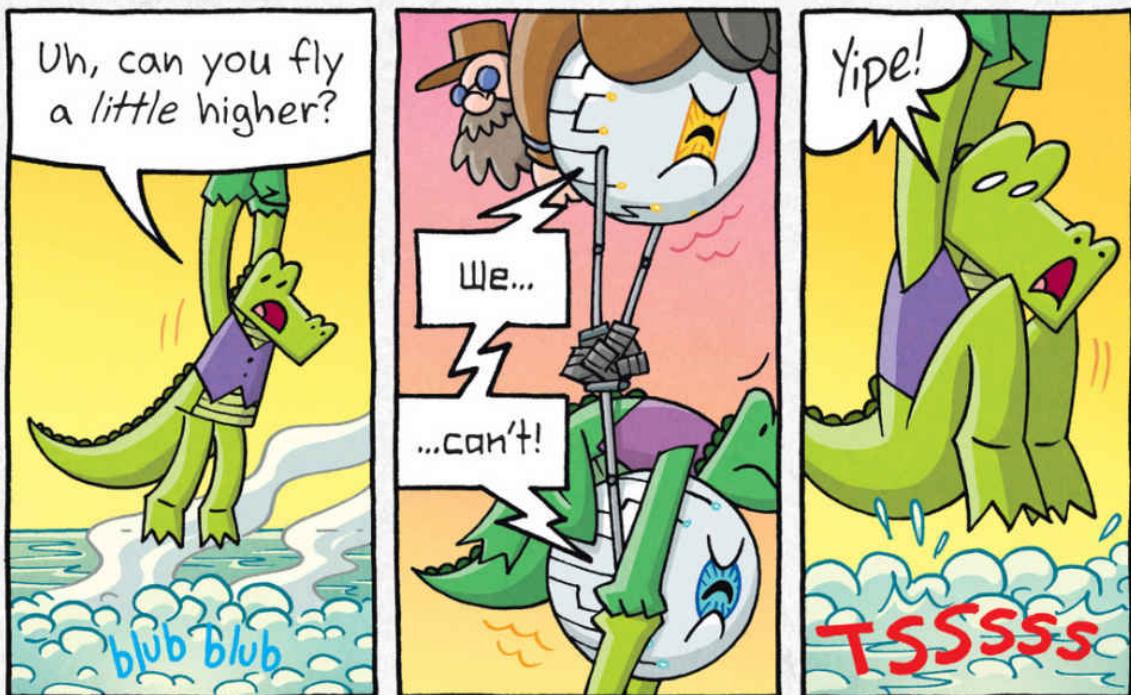
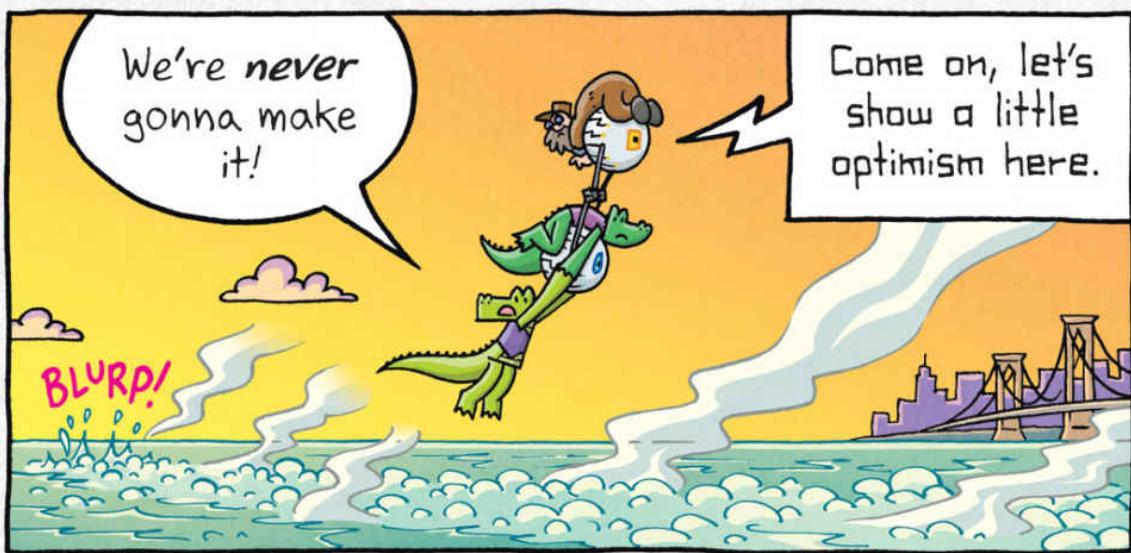


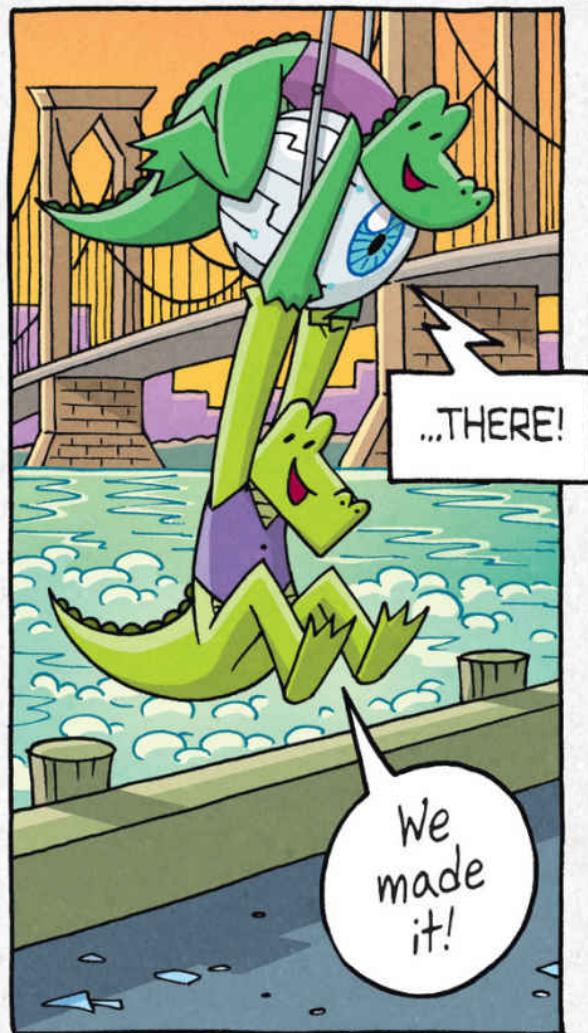
You are, and always have been, my friend.







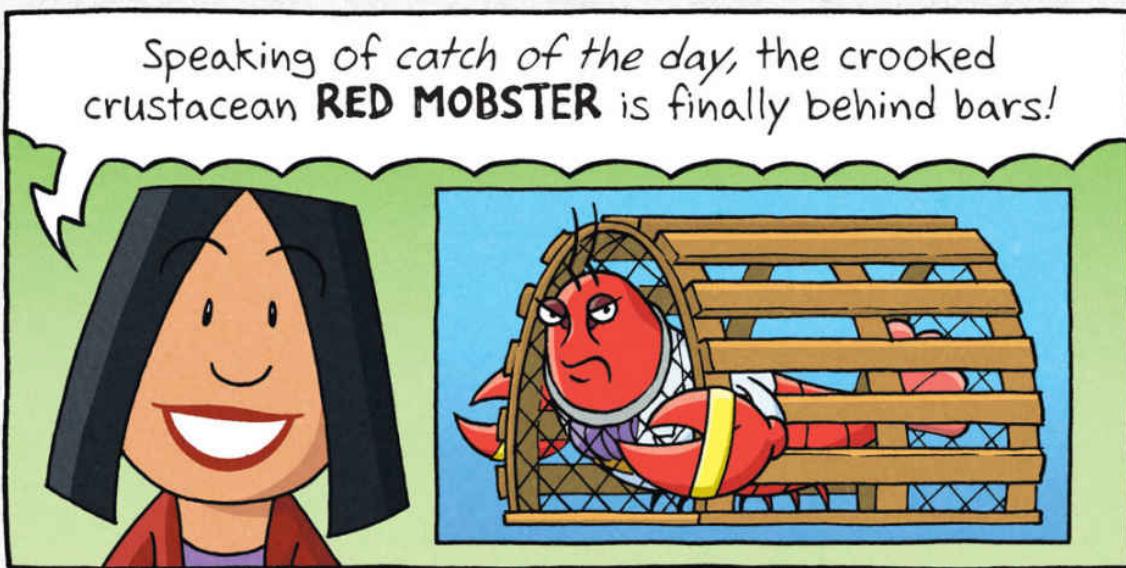






Epilogue

That was the scene not long ago when the city's savior and protector, the **InvestiGator**, marched into the ocean, never to be seen again.



Red's capture was in part thanks to the testimony of **THIS** man: **Saul T. Byproducts!** The former saltine baker confessed to taking out the mob's trash and covering up Red's most **TOXIC** crimes.



Now, having turned state's witness, Saul is serving out his own criminal sentence: **collecting trash!**



In old news, **Anjie's Antiques** is back with **NEW** Boulder Buddies! Turns out they're just the **OLD** Boulder Buddies with smiley faces drawn on them.



I guess everything that made Daryl who he was, was in that radioactive goo that evaporated away.

Now those rocks are just *empty shells*.



Daryl is gone forever. Again.



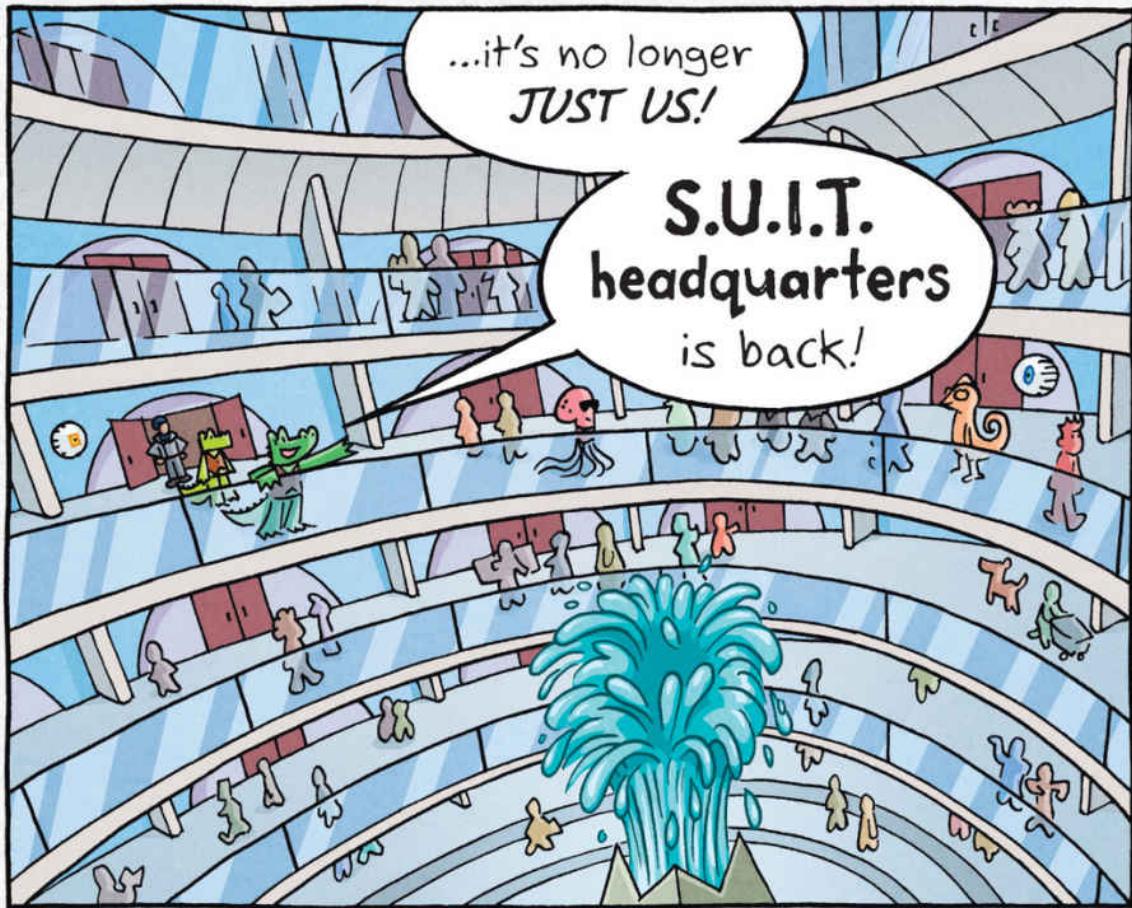
I know I've said this before, but the city is safe thanks to both of you, **InvestiGators**.



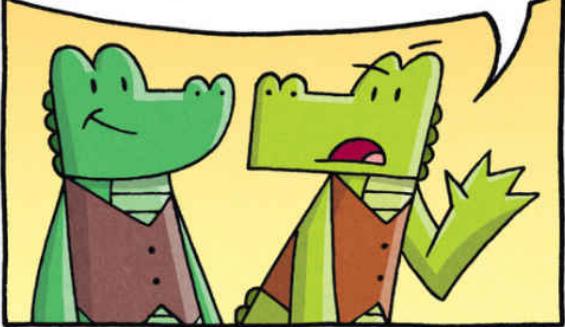
And now that **MegaRoboBrash** no longer looms over the skyline to be recognized from miles away, Brash can confidently go undercover to bring **MORE** villains like **Red Mobster** and **Saul T. Byproducts** to **JUSTICE**.

And speaking of justice...

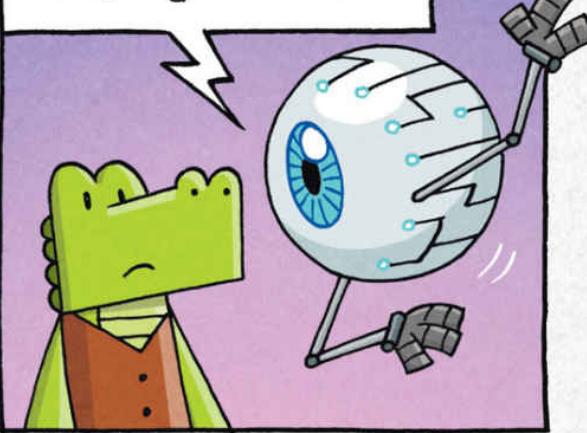




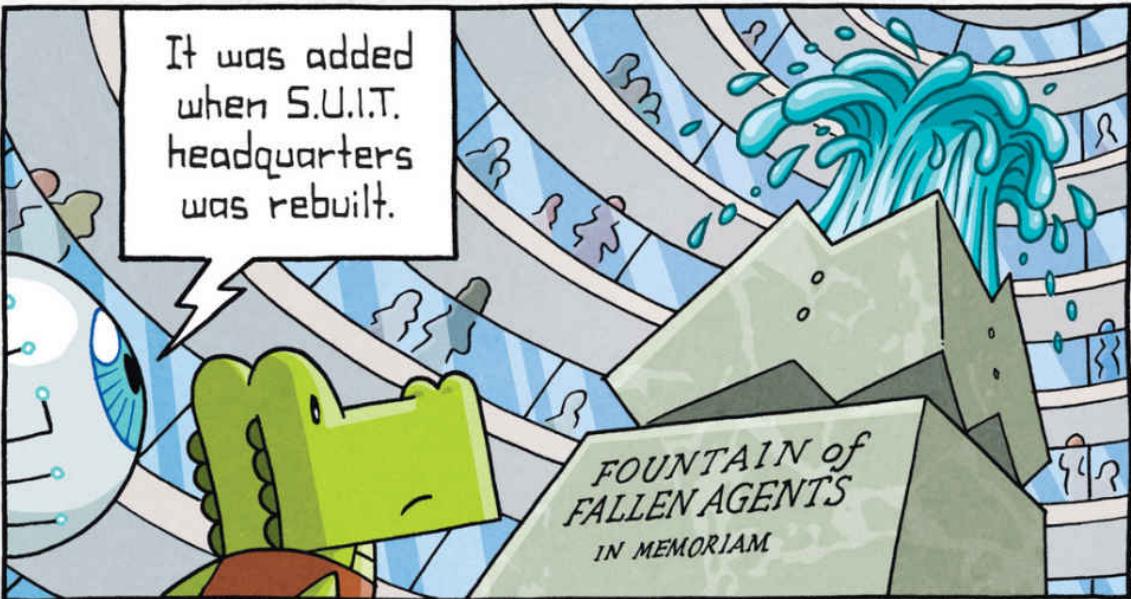
YES, Mango, I KNOW!
We saw everyone on our
way into the General
Inspector's office!



But have you seen
this, Agent Brash?



It was added
when S.U.I.T.
headquarters
was rebuilt.

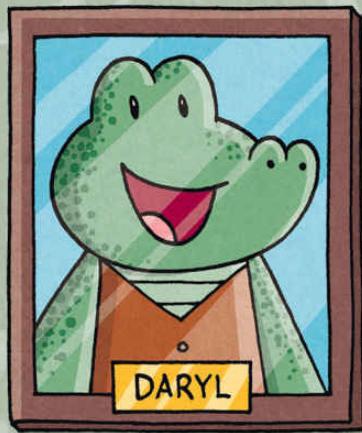


Daryl may be no more, Brash. But if he hadn't come
back as **Rockodile**, you and Mango may never have
uncovered the identity of the true criminal responsible
for turning Daryl into a monster in the first place.





IN MEMORIAM



No one's ever really gone, Mango.

So long as we remember them, Brash.

IN MEMORIAM



And whether delivering laundry, solving mysteries, or fighting crime, **NO MATTER WHAT**, the world will always need the **InvestiGators!**



THE END!

Oh, hello there! We'd all been so busy with rebuilding S.U.I.T. headquarters, that the next **InvestiGATORS** adventure is still under construction.

But be patient...
MANGO and **BRASH**
will return!



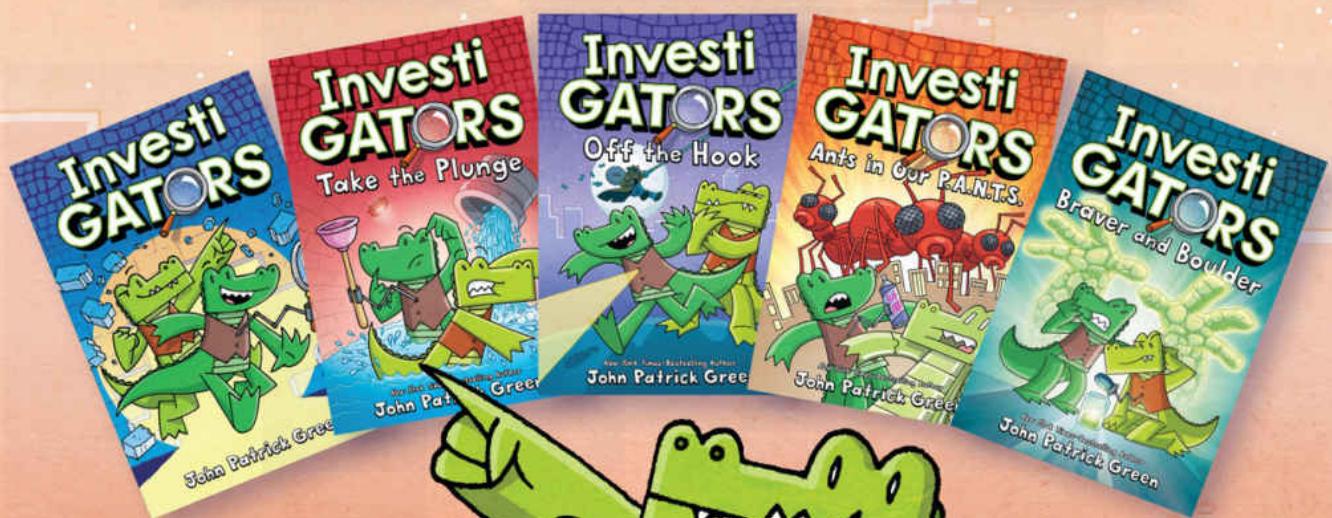
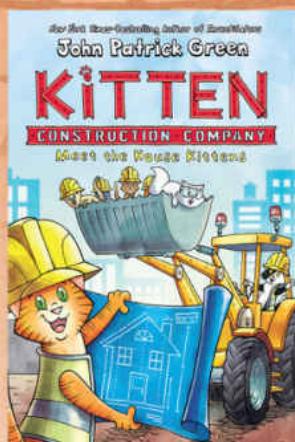
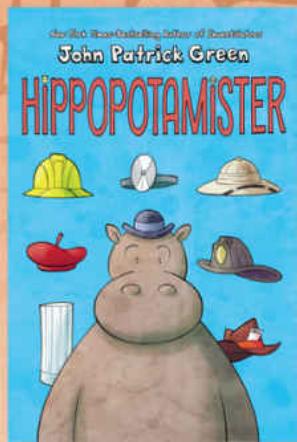
I can't wait!
What'll I do for
FUN until then?

Looking for something
to *do*, Dr. Doodledoo?
There's plenty to keep
you entertained at
InvestiGatorsBooks.com

- Case Files
- Character Bios
- Puzzles & Games
- Art Activities
- Videos & Music
- and **MORE!**

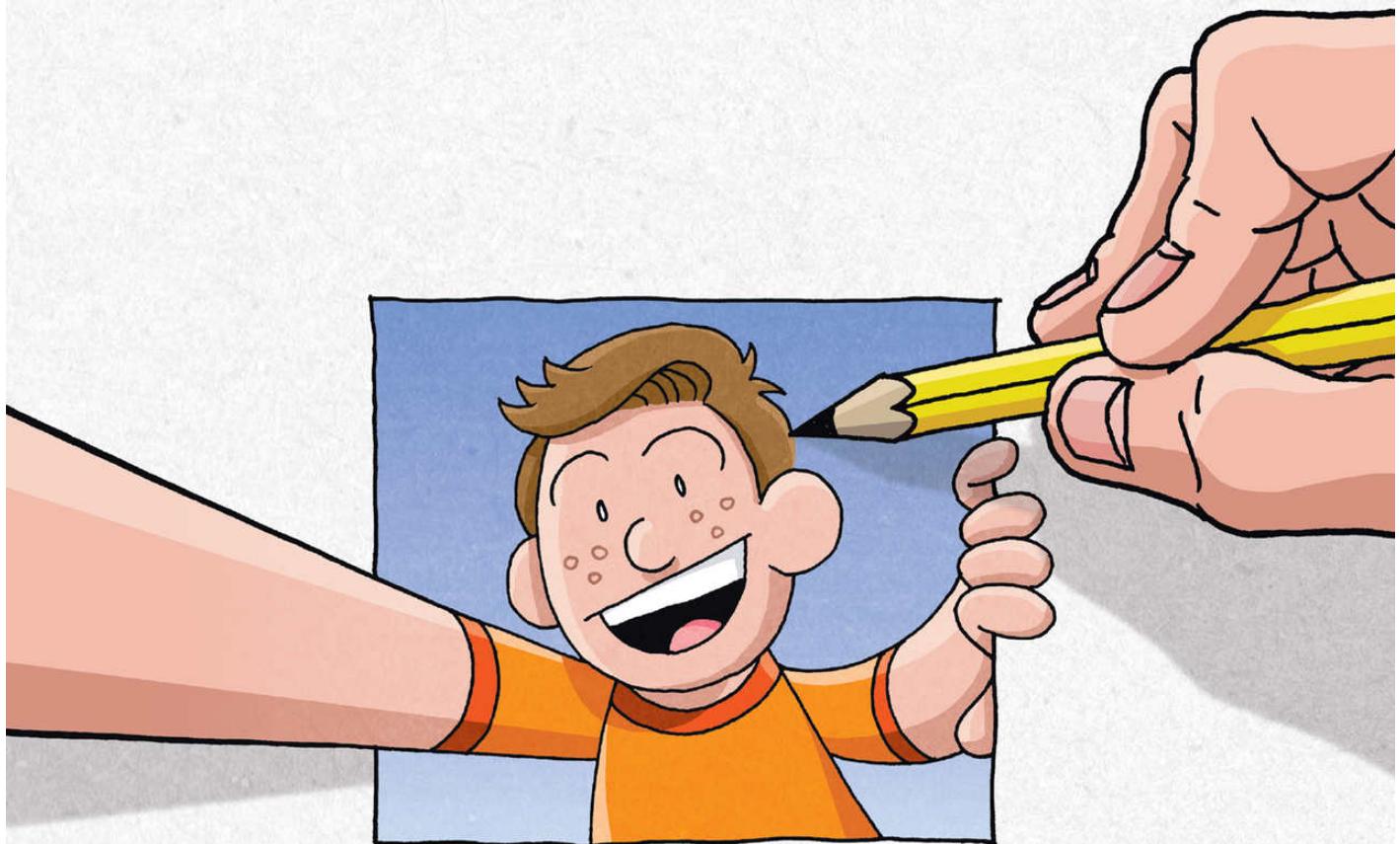


Read the John Patrick Green Collection!



:01

First Second
firstsecondbooks.com



Investi GATORS

Braver and Boulder



written and illustrated by
John Patrick Green

with color by Wes Dzioba

:01

First Second
New York

Praise for *InvestiGators*

"A sugar rush manifested as a graphic novel."

—Kirkus Reviews

Things are **BUSINESS** as usual for the **InvestiGators** . . .

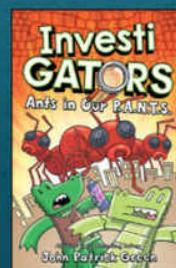
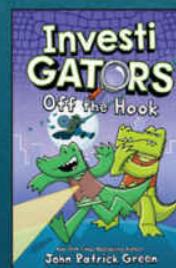


... until they're caught between **ROCKS** and a hard place!



Will Mango and Brash defeat their most **STONE**-cold nemesis yet?

**ROCK OUT
WITH THE
WHOLE SERIES!**



Cover art © 2022 by John Patrick Green

Cover design by John Patrick Green and Molly Johanson



First Second
New York